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by

Frantz Funck-Brentano

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The Diamond Necklace: being the true story of Marie Antoinette and the Cardinal de Rohan. Authorised translation by H. SUTHERLAND EDWARDS. *With Twelve Illustrations.* 1901. Crown 8vo, 6*s*. London: John Macqueen.

Princes and Poisoners: studies of the Court of Louis XIV. Translated by GEORGE MAIDMENT. *With Two Illustrations. Second edition.* 1901. Pott 4to, 6*s*. London: Duckworth and Co.

Legends of the Bastille: the true story of the Man in the Iron Mask. Translated by GEORGE MAIDMENT. *With Eight Illustrations.* 1899. Crown 8vo, 6*s*. London: Downey and Co.

MARIE ANTOINETTE.

Frontispiece.

CAGLIOSTRO AND COMPANY

A SEQUEL TO THE
STORY OF THE DIAMOND NECKLACE

BY

FRANTZ FUNCK-BRENTANO

TRANSLATED BY

GEORGE MAIDMENT

WITH TEN ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

MEDITATING at St. Helena on the events of the Revolution, Napoleon let his thoughts dwell on the Diamond Necklace affair. 'Perhaps,' he said, 'the death of the queen dates from that.' Mirabeau and Goethe thought the same, and it is also the conclusion of the best informed of modern historians like M. Pierre de Nolhac. Their opinion has been quoted in a former book, *The Diamond Necklace*, devoted to the origin and the development of the famous case. In the following pages the reader will find an account of the ulterior destinies of the chief persons involved in the mystery; and he will see by what a chain of

circumstances Marie Antoinette was drawn to the scaffold.

The unpublished documents of which use has been made are very numerous. On the majority of points facts hitherto unknown will be met with. We venture to mention this only that we may express our indebtedness for a great part of this new information to the erudition of M. Alfred Bégis, Treasurer and Keeper of the Records of the Society of Contemporary History, and Secretary of the Society of Booklovers.

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CAGLIOSTRO AND COMPANY

INTRODUCTORY

THE curtain had fallen on the great Necklace act, which had been agitating all Paris for months. The famous Diamond Necklace had been obtained from the court jewellers by the Cardinal de Rohan through the agency of the woman calling herself the Countess de La Motte, on the representation that the Queen of France, Marie Antoinette, had ordered it, and would pay for it in instalments. The instalments when due were not paid, and the jewellers, after showing themselves curiously lax men of business, had made inquiries which had resulted in the pricking of the gigantic bubble. The queen had never had the

Necklace, which the countess and her husband had broken up and sold piecemeal. The question was, how far the Cardinal de Rohan was a dupe, how far he was an accomplice. He declared that the countess had shown him letters bearing the queen's signature, authorising every step he had taken, and that he believed the Necklace had been ordered by the queen. He declared also that the countess had contrived a meeting between himself and the queen one night in the grove of Venus at Versailles. As a result of the exposure the cardinal was arrested, along with the Count and Countess de La Motte, the girl who called herself the Baroness d'Oliva, and who was said to have personated the queen, and the so-called Count Cagliostro, who had been a sort of familiar spirit to the cardinal. After the complicated process of law, in which interrogatory and confrontation succeeded confrontation and interro-

gatory, and the various accused persons told their several stories, the Parlement had at last delivered its verdict. The signature of the queen was declared a forgery. Cagliostro and the cardinal were acquitted of all complicity in the crime; the Baroness d'Oliva was acquitted, with a mild censure for having allowed herself to be the tool of designing villains; and the Count de La Motte was sentenced to the galleys for life. The protagonist, the petite, vivacious, extraordinarily clever Madame de La Motte, was condemned to be whipped, naked, by the public executioner, branded on the shoulders with the letter V (*voleuse*, robber), confined at the Salpétrière gaol for the rest of her life, and deprived of all her property. The sentences on the La Mottes were severe enough; the absolute acquittal of the cardinal was a great blow to the royal house. The king, Louis XVI., who had acted throughout with astonishing want

of foresight and lack of judgment, sent the cardinal to his Benedictine Abbey of La Chaise-Dieu, and exiled Cagliostro, who departed with his wife for England. La Motte escaped; his wife suffered her ignominious branding and was incarcerated in the Conciergerie.

It is with the further fortunes of these actors, and some of their associates, and with the circumstances leading up to the death of the queen, that the following pages have to do.

G. M.

I

CAGLIOSTRO TO THE FRENCH PEOPLE

Cagliostro had no sooner left the Bastille than, seeing the unanimous movement of sympathy evoked by Nicole d'Oliva, and always keenly alive to the trend of public opinion, he hastened to send the young woman seven hundred crowns. This soon found its way into the Gazettes, with commentaries: 'This is how the extraordinary man avenges himself for calumnious reports. He is accused of charlatanism, and he passes his life in relieving the unfortunate!' In the little lodging he occupied for a short time at Passy, he received 'all Paris' before he left—writers, parliamentarians, Duval d'Eprémesnil; and when

people thought they ought to make a reference to his misfortunes, he displayed immense wealth, saying: 'I don't need anybody's assistance; don't pity me.'

On June 13, he made his preparations for departure, in obedience to the *lettre de cachet* exiling him from France. After having gone to find his wife, who had retired to Saint-Denis, he arrived at Boulogne on the 16th, and embarked for England. 'The shores I left,' he said, 'were lined with a crowd of citizens of all conditions, who blessed me, and thanked me for the good I had done their brethren. They plied me with the most touching farewells. The winds were already wafting me far from them; I no longer heard them, but I saw them still, their hands raised towards heaven, and I blessed them in my turn, and cried out again and again as though they could hear me: "Farewell, Frenchmen! farewell, my children; my country, farewell!"'

On arriving in London, Cagliostro issued his celebrated 'Letter to the French People.' It is dated June 26, 1786.

'I have been hunted from France,' exclaims the prophet; 'the king has been deceived. Kings are to be pitied for having such ministers. I mean to speak of the Baron de Breteuil. What have I done to this man? Of what does he accuse me? Of being loved by the cardinal, and of not deserting him; of seeking the truth, telling the truth, defending the truth; of assisting suffering humanity, by my alms, my remedies, my counsels. Those are my crimes! He cannot bear that a man in irons, a stranger under the bolts of the Bastille, in his power—his, the worthy minister of his horrible prison — should have raised his voice as I have done, to make him known,—him, and his principles, his agents, his creatures!

'Well then, resolve me of a doubt.

The king has banished me from his kingdom, but he has not heard me. Is it thus that all *lettres de cachet* are put in force in France? If so it is, I pity you, and the more because this Baron de Breteuil will have this dangerous department. What! your persons and property are at the mercy of this man? By himself alone he can deceive the king with impunity; acting on slanderous and never contradicted information he can issue and have put into execution, by men like himself, rigorous orders which plunge the innocent man into a cell, and deliver his house over to plunder!

'Are all state prisons like the Bastille? No one can have any idea of the horrors of that place; cynical impudence, odious falsehood, sham pity, bitter irony, relentless cruelty, injustice and death are seated there. A barbarous silence is the least of the crimes there committed. For six months I was within fifteen feet of my wife with-

out knowing it. Others have been buried there for thirty years, are reputed dead, are unhappy in not being dead, having, like Milton's damned souls, only so much light in their abyss as to perceive the impenetrable darkness that enwraps them. I said it in captivity, and I repeat it a free man: there is no crime but is amply expiated by six months in the Bastille. Some one asked me whether I should return to France supposing the prohibitions laid on me were removed? Assuredly, I replied, provided the Bastille became a public promenade!

'You have all that is needed for happiness, Frenchmen: a fertile soil, a mild climate, kindly hearts, charming gaiety, genius, graces all your own; unequalled in the art of pleasing, unsurpassed in the other arts—all you want, my good friends, is one little thing: to be sure of lying in your own beds when you are irreproachable.

'To labour for this happy revolution is a

task worthy of your parlements. It is only difficult to feeble souls.

'Yes, I declare to you, there will reign over you a prince who will achieve glory in the abolition of *lettres de cachet*, and the convocation of your States-General. He will feel that the abuse of power is in the long-run destructive of power itself. He will not be satisfied with being the first of his ministers; he will aim at being the first of Frenchmen.'

These lines, dated 1786, are really astonishing. People speak sometimes of the predictions of Voltaire and Rousseau. 'We are approaching a condition of crisis and the age of revolutions,' wrote Rousseau. 'All that I see is sowing the seeds of a revolution which will inevitably come,' wrote Voltaire. Stray utterances culled from a mass of writings filling fifty and sixty volumes. All those who, setting up to teach mankind,

find that mankind will not be led by their wishes, speak thus. Voltaire and Rousseau were men of letters who wrote admirably and expounded very interesting theories; but what a vivid, concrete, precise intellect Cagliostro must have had, along with an intuitive perception of realities, to say to the French in 1786: 'Within a little, your States-General will be convoked, your Bastille will become a public promenade, and your *lettres de cachet* will be abolished.'

And we may imagine the hubbub made in the streets of Paris by hawkers selling 'the Letter to the French People,' running along with perspiring faces, repeating their cry, 'Here's something new!' in the gardens and the cafés. The public rushed to meet them. Their 'papers' were snatched from their hands.

Breteuil at once suffered in reputation. In vain he showed himself, in his ministerial office, to be one of the most generous

spirits France has ever known, a noble and liberal-minded reformer; in vain had he, by his memorable circular of 1784, which had marvellous results all through France, virtually put an end to the régime of *lettres de cachet*; in vain had he decided on the demolition of the Bastille, and from that time transformed it into a prison for ordinary criminals, closed the castle of Vincennes and the horrible tower of Caen, opened the gates of Bicêtre to Latude, liberated at one stroke three-fourths of the prisoners incarcerated in the houses of correction; in vain had he, by a general order of October 31, 1785, set free all those who were detained in virtue of a family *lettre de cachet*—and it is well known that imprisonments of this kind were very numerous; in vain had he forbidden the local magistrates to authorise any incarceration whatever save after a regular trial; in vain did he draw up on

October 6, 1787, his instructions on the treatment of madmen in the hospitals, and attempted to realise, with unequalled activity and energy, the new ideas of progress and liberty: Cagliostro dealt him a blow in public opinion from which he never recovered. And thus later, when the hour of revolution struck, the pamphleteers and orators of the public gardens had no difficulty in persuading the people that Breteuil wanted to cut their throats. And the spread of the news that he had returned to power was the signal for the insurrection.

II

CAGLIOSTRO AGAINST THE GOVERNOR OF THE BASTILLE

MEANWHILE Cagliostro had begun his famous action against the Marquis de Launey, Governor of the Bastille, and against the younger Chesnon, the Commissary of the Châtelet who had been ordered to search his house when he had been taken prisoner. On May 29, when Cagliostro had not yet been tried and was still in duress, Maître Thilorier had issued a petition, 'as well written,' observes Hardy the bookseller, 'as the memorial previously so much acclaimed by the people,' and containing the 'striking demonstration' of the following facts: (1) 'By the fault of Com-

missary Chesnon when making a search in the house of Cagliostro, then forcing open the desks, opening all the cupboards and wardrobes, tearing and upsetting the goods of the count and his wife—hats, feathers, dresses, linen—throwing them about in promiscuous heaps, then neglecting to put everything under seal before leaving, more than 100,000 livres worth of goods had been ruined or left to be plundered: (2) the Marquis de Launey, Governor of the Bastille, had kept in his own possession, refusing to deliver them up to the plaintiff or his wife, diamonds and jewels of very considerable value.'

Cagliostro gives details. The underlings of the commissary seized on whatever took their fancy. 'The police-officer had the audacity to take possession, in the presence of the plaintiff, of balms, drugs, elixirs, to the value of two hundred louis, without any opposition from the commissary. From

my desk disappeared: (1) fifteen rolls of fifty pistoles each, sealed with my seal; (2) 1233 Venetian and Roman sequins; (3) a roll of twenty-four Spanish double pistoles sealed with my seal; (4) forty-seven bank-notes of 1000 livres each. In addition, there were papers of the greatest importance in my green portfolio. They are lost, and the resulting damage to me is more than 50,000 livres.'

Not satisfied with these depredations, the commissary had executed his orders in the most vexatious manner, jostling and roughly handling the Count de Cagliostro and his wife in the street, to the scandal of the passers-by. On this ground an indemnity of 50,000 livres was claimed. The total amount due by the government of the king or his agents was 200,000 livres, half of which Cagliostro waived, with characteristic greatness of soul, for the purchase of bread for the poor prisoners at the Châtelet.

His claim was presented on May 29, before the Diamond Necklace case was concluded. On June 21, Cagliostro, through his lawyers in Paris, sent from London to the Marquis de Launey and Chesnon a writ to appear at the Châtelet.

Cagliostro's statement of claim ends with the following words: 'Doubtless I shall not be required to establish these facts by corroborative evidence. A citizen does not call two citizens every day to testify to the state of his cash-box. I should regard this precaution as not only useless, but insulting to the nation whose hospitality I am enjoying. Will it be said that the facts I assert are improbable? All those who know me can say whether, since I have been in France, I have openly spent less than 100,000 livres a year. Is it surprising, then, that a man who is not accustomed to count his money should have a year's income in his possession?

And I undertake to affirm on oath the accuracy of the statement I have already certified. This, without doubt, is all that justice has a right to demand. No one will imagine that for the sum of 100,000 livres the Count de Cagliostro will consent to perjure himself in the eyes of all Europe.'

'Everybody was struck,' says Hardy, 'with the clearness, precision, and energy of the count's plea. The document in which the suppliant's rights seemed as well established as ingeniously argued, met with the same reception from the public as former documents.'

A second statement followed. 'It presents the facts,' says Hardy, 'in a manner exactly calculated to stir men's minds and to interest citizens of all conditions.' Let us quote the peroration :—

'Frenchmen, a nation truly generous, truly hospitable, I shall never forget either

the touching interest you have taken in my fate, or the gentle tears your transports have made me shed. Calumny and persecution have dogged my steps. All the torture that human heart could suffer, mine had already experienced. A single day of glory and happiness has recompensed me for all my long sufferings.' (Cagliostro is alluding to his triumph after being acquitted by the Parlement.) 'Invited, desired, regretted everywhere, I had chosen for my habitation the land wherein you dwell; I had done there all the good that my fortune and talents permitted me to do. Strasburg, Lyons, Paris, you all bear witness of me to the universe! You will say if ever I offended the least of your inhabitants! You will say if religion, good government, and law were not always sacred to me; and yet the voice of my enemies has prevailed. They have deceived a king; a letter of

exile, and indefinite exile, is my reward. I am driven from France! Dwellers in that happy country, people of amiable manners and tender hearts, receive the adieux of an unfortunate man worthy perhaps of your esteem and your regrets.

'He has gone, but his heart remains with you. Whatever region he inhabits, believe that he will constantly show himself the friend of the French name; happy, if the woes he experienced in your country fall on himself alone!'

'The public,' says Hardy, 'devoured the Count de Cagliostro's memorial, which had been printed in sufficient quantities to satisfy their avidity.'

Now it happened that at this time Latude, released from prison, was filling France with tales of his long martyrdom; and Linguet's pamphlet against the Bastille, with that of Mirabeau against arbitrary

orders, were creating a formidable stir. Nowadays we know what exaggerations and lies these writings contained; but the populace in their unhappy state of dread eagerly swallowed them. The Marquis de Launey was governor of the Bastille, and the Commissary Chesnon was the officer responsible for carrying into effect the *lettres de cachet.* 'We remember,' said Chesnon in his answer to Cagliostro's accusations, 'the terrible effect his memorial made among the public. It had the same effect throughout Europe. The retailing of it brought sedition nearer.' Cagliostro for his part, in a letter to the English people issued shortly afterwards, remarked with pride: 'My indictment against Chesnon and de Launey appeared. It made on all minds an impression that still endures, and will always endure whatever may happen, because the truth is ineffaceable.'

III

THE ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

The king relegated the matter to the Council of Despatches, and appointed a commission consisting of La Michodière, Abbé of Radonvilliers, Vidaud de Latour and Lambert, Councillors of State. The public raised new protests. Why not the Châtelet, to which Cagliostro had appealed? Why not the regular tribunals? They were afraid of the light of day, and wanted closed doors! Hardy explains this attitude: 'The fact is that de Launey and Chesnon were absolutely identified with what was called the administration, an expression so important that woe betide any one who had to combat it!'

A thousand rumours ran through the city. Some said that Cagliostro was returning to France to defend his cause, at the invitation of the king, who had offered him a safe-conduct. 'No,' replied others: 'the Sieur de Cagliostro has taken the fixed determination not to trust to the fine declarations of the French ministry, of which he has once been the dupe in a way that he will remember all his life, however long that may be—and nevermore to return to the bosom of a nation which he loves, but whose despotic government he abhors.' This party affirmed that the government, to hush the matter up, had restored the greater part of his goods and money; and the former party that Cagliostro had just withdrawn his petition, 'refusing to continue his case before the Council of Despatches, which he did not regard as a legal tribunal, but merely as a royal commission.'

Launey and Chesnon filed dignified answers, showing the regularity of their proceedings. The official reports were duly drawn up, proving that all the customary formalities had been observed. Madame de Cagliostro had signed a receipt for all the effects she had deposited in the Bastille. Launey added: 'The Sieur de Cagliostro demands the restoration of a sum of 100,000 livres found in his desk. Justice will pay the less credence to his statement, when it sees from the documents deposited in the Bastille, and written in his own handwriting, that he was constantly occupied in imploring charity and generosity from his friends; that he was continually levying contributions upon them, and that when he spoke of his desk, nothing was further from his thoughts than considerable sums and precious objects.'

Chesnon spoke more strongly. 'It is a sad thing for decency—I will say more, for

the public security, that calumny is so easily diffused; it is a sad thing that a mere signature, most often borrowed by a writer who would not dare acknowledge what he has written, should without difficulty become the passport of a false libel: copies of it are multiplied in proportion as these bold pens have spread malice, spite, and gall; curiosity snatches at them, cupidity puts them up for sale, and the documents which the law only allows to be printed for the information of the judges have become for some time past a shameful object of trade and speculation. The blow falls unforeseen, and though the wound made by calumny will be healed, the scar will remain.'

On July 14, 1787, the Committee of Councillors of State reported to the Council of Despatches in favour of the rejection of Cagliostro's plea. Thus the governor of the Bastille and the Châtelet commissary were

completely exonerated. The scandal of the sale of documents during the course of the Necklace case had, however, been so great, and the torrent of calumnies and slanders spread by Madame de La Motte and Cagliostro so atrocious, that Vidaud de Latour, Director-General of Bookselling, along with the Keeper of the Seals, Hue de Miromesnil, determined to put vigorously in force by a decree of September 17, 1787, the prohibitions against selling 'any memoir, pleading, consultation, abstract, reply, or other documents drawn up in cases pending before the courts.' This decision was at once notified to the booksellers and printers of Paris, by a circular from the syndics and aldermen in charge of the community.

Those who in our time vilify with such ready eloquence the coercive measures adopted towards the press under the *ancien*

régime do not know, or perhaps forget, in what conditions calumny and slander were then spread.

In our time the press is its own conservator and physician. Suppose some one were nowadays to put forth against the Government one of those innumerable calumnies which in the last year of the *ancien régime* were daily displayed in newsletters, gazettes, handbills, and various brochures and pamphlets; an official agency would instantly circulate a correction among the journals, and next day all France would know what the Ministry declared to be the truth. But at the period with which we are dealing, the press agencies did not exist. Calumny displayed itself in all security, without fear of a contradiction, and certain of finding credence. On the Bastille and the prisoners, the *lettres de cachet*, the control of the finances, the king and queen, the morals of the court, the

clergy, the nobility, and soon on the Parlement itself, on the heads of Parisian industry, on all that represented a tradition or an authority, a respect or a belief, the most unlikely and absurd stories were disseminated; they found attentive and hospitable ears, and mouths clever enough to carry them into the minds of the most intelligent, and these repeated them in their turn, strengthening them with their authority. This was the prelude to the Revolution.

'Calumny,' Don Bazile[1] was saying at this very moment,—'there is no piece of dull malice, no horror, no absurd tale, but people get adopted if they take the trouble. First a gentle rumour, skimming the soil like a swallow before the storm. *Pianissimo* —the poisoned arrow murmurs and whizzes along, dropping its venom as it flies. Some mouth or other receives it, and then

[1] In Beaumarchais' *Marriage of Figaro.*

piano, piano, cleverly drops it into your ear. The mischief is done; the seed springs up, the plant grows and spreads insidiously, and, *rinforzando*, it plays the very devil from mouth to mouth; then, all at once, goodness knows how, you see calumny rearing its head, hissing, swelling itself out, getting bigger as you watch. It darts on, extends its flight, whirls round, envelops everything, drags men after it, bursts out like thunder, and becomes a general outcry, a public *crescendo*, a universal *chorus* of hate and proscription. Who in the world could resist it?'

A Cagliostro attacked a minister or his agents: the sale of his precious productions almost provoked riots. Yet the king had, in the drawers of the lieutenant-general of police, all the facts necessary to undeceive the public. But how could he communicate them to the people? To-day we have innumerable agencies besides the active pens

of journalists; in those days there was nothing, nothing but the confidence of the people in the king, their good sense, their attachment to the crown. A fine thing to be king!

IV

GIUSEPPE BALSAMO

If only Breteuil had been able to bring to the knowledge of the public the collection of documents made by commissary Fontaine, Cagliostro would doubtless not have found such ardent admirers. Fontaine had discovered—and the documents collected later on by the Inquisition at Rome confirmed his researches in all particulars—that the illustrious prophet, who had once conversed with Christ beneath the shade of the olives, was born at Palermo on June 8, 1743. His real name was Giuseppe Balsamo, and he was the son of Pietro Balsamo and of Felice Braconieri his wife. His father, of Jewish extraction, was a bankrupt trades-

man of Palermo, and died at the age of forty-five. His widowed mother had lived with her son Giuseppe and a daughter named Joanna Maria. In 1758, when fifteen years old, Giuseppe Balsamo had donned the costume of the Brothers of the Misericordia, whose mission it was to attend the sick; but he had remained only a short time in their order, picking up with them, however, the elements of pharmacy.

In Sicily, no less than in France, the quest of treasure had been all the rage a century before. Young Balsamo became a treasure-seeker. He was a clever youth, and got a rich goldsmith of Palermo, one Marano, to believe that there lay in a grotto in the heart of the country an immense treasure, of which he would make him the owner. Marano gave him two hundred ounces of gold. A meeting at the spot was arranged. It was a fine moonlight night. Balsamo began his in-

cantations. All at once a band of demons, clothed in deep black, appeared, fell on Marano, and gave him a sound thrashing. The good man was cudgelled and robbed. As ill-luck would have it, Balsamo could not keep this remarkable stroke of business to himself; the result was that the goldsmith learned how he had been tricked, and hired ruffians to assassinate the young magician, who in all haste fled to Calabria with two of his associates, a priest and a servant. But these two had so well learnt their part of spirit-rappers that, once in Calabria, they belaboured Balsamo and took Marano's money from him. And Balsamo, thus in his turn robbed and beaten, reached Rome in 1760 utterly destitute.

The wonders of the Eternal City acted as an inspiration. He learnt drawing, and very soon acquired a surprising facility. His was a copyist's talent, for he had none of the gifts of the creative artist. He

copied on old paper, with special inks, the etchings of Rembrandt, so cleverly that it was impossible to distinguish the original from the reproduction. He imitated handwritings with amazing success, and attained a real perfection in the art of forging wills, which compelled him more than once to decamp hurriedly from the place he had settled in. He made pen-drawings for great Roman lords, and for Cardinal Orsini, who honoured him with his protection; but his fortune remained only moderate. Love consoled him for his poverty. In Pellegrini Street, in the workshop of a *batadore*—that is, a smelter of copper for carriage ornaments—he was touched by the sweet and tender grace of a girl named Lorenza Feliciani. Lorenza's eyes seemed like the transparent shadows of deep water, her waving tresses had the colour of ripe corn, and her lips were gleaming red, like cherries in June.

MADAME DE CAGLIOSTRO.

She was just entering her fifteenth year.

And there were meetings at the house of an old Neapolitan woman hard by the smelter's workshop. Balsamo was wonderfully eloquent, and the child drank in his words, gazing at him with her big limpid eyes. The father thought the girl too young; but the child declared that she would marry Balsamo or die. Her father gave way, and the marriage was celebrated in April 1769, at the parish church of San Salvador in Campo.

Balsamo's drawings did not provide a sufficient income for the young couple. A Sicilian marquis persuaded him to go to Germany, promising to obtain for him a captain's commission in the service of the King of Prussia, and to employ him in the meantime as his Italian secretary. Donna Lorenza, as we know from contemporary evidence, was 'one of the beauties of Europe.' Her complexion was of un-

surpassable purity, her expression was full of grace and sweetness. Balsamo and his wife went, then, to Loretto, thence to Berg in the state of Venice, where they got into hot water with the police in regard to some letters that the Sicilian marquis had forged in conjunction with Balsamo.

Goethe tells the story of the incident. The forged documents were intended to be used in an important lawsuit concerning the succession to an estate in which the Sicilian was interested. Balsamo was flung into prison. Boiling with rage, the marquis hastened to the president of the court, in whose anteroom he found the advocate of the opposite party. He began a discussion with him, seized him by the throat, knocked him down, and stamped on him. The noise brought the president from his study. He was a weak man, says Goethe, easily influenced by stronger minds. The advocate was reduced to a state of terror

by the ill-treatment he had received. The upshot was that Balsamo was set at liberty, without any formalities, says Goethe, without even any mention being made of his liberation in the register of the jail. But it was necessary that he should seek other climes. After selling their effects, Balsamo and his wife arrived at Milan almost destitute, and proceeded to Genoa, whence they resolved to go and seek their fortune in Spain.

Casanova met the young couple in 1770, as they passed through Aix in Provence. They were dressed as pilgrims. 'They could not but be people of high birth,' he says, 'since on arriving at the town they distributed alms widely. The female pilgrim was, it was said, charming, and quite young; but she was tired out, and went to bed at once.'

Next day, Casanova solicited the honour of an audience. He was lodging in the

same inn. 'We found the female pilgrim seated in a chair, looking like a person exhausted with fatigue, and interesting by reason of her youth and beauty, singularly heightened by a touch of melancholy, and by a crucifix of yellow metal, six inches long, which she held in her hands. Her companion, who was arranging shells on his cloak of black baize, made no movement; he appeared to tell us, by the looks he cast on his wife, that we were to attend to her alone.'

'We are going on foot,' said Lorenza, 'living on charity, the better to obtain the mercy of God, whom I have so often offended. Though I ask only a sou in charity, people always give me pieces of silver and even gold, so that on arriving at a town we have to distribute to the poor all that remains to us, in order not to commit the sin of losing confidence in Eternal Providence.'

'This young woman,' adds Casanova, 'far from flaunting the airs of libertinage, had all the outward bearing of virtue. Invited to write her name on a lottery ticket, she excused herself, saying that at Rome girls were not taught to write if they were to be bred up to virtue and honour. Every one laughed at this excuse but myself, and I felt certain then that she belonged to the lowest classes of the people.'

They came at length to Barcelona, where Balsamo worked for the viceroy. But after four months they were obliged to leave the town 'because the viceroy,' says Lorenza, 'had taken a fancy for me, wanted to amuse himself with me, and when I repulsed him, conceived much ill-humour against us and wanted to vex us and to have me arrested, under the pretext that I was not married.' They went on to Madrid, where they spent the year 1771, Balsamo working for the Duke of Alva. They there made the

acquaintance of another Sicilian who also played them tricks, which compelled them to depart for Lisbon; but the young woman being unable to endure the climate of that city, they betook themselves to London in 1772.

In London, Balsamo set up as a painter. He joined a certain Pergolesi, a designer of Compton Street, but was not long in falling out with him. He lodged in the same street as a turner. 'He hadn't a crown of his own,' wrote a French officer who knew him in those days, 'got drunk constantly, beat his wife, and had the style and the manners of a clown.'

At this period Balsamo made the acquaintance of a third Sicilian who went by the name of the 'Marquis of Vivona.' They were both received into the austere fellowship of a congregation of quakers. At the fine eyes of Lorenza, the austerity of one of these quakers melted away like the

morning haze in the sunbeam. It was agreed between Balsamo and Vivona that Lorenza should arrange a meeting with the quaker. He appeared at the appointed hour, and the conversation grew so warm that the quaker had stripped off his hat and wig and coat—when Lorenza gave a scream, the door flew open, and the outraged husband burst in, with Vivona as a witness: and the quaker had permission to retire, after signing a note for a hundred pounds sterling.

With all his hundred pounds, Balsamo was not long after thrown into prison for debt. An English lord, whom Lorenza calls by the extraordinary name of Sir Dehels, procured his liberation, and took him and his wife to a country house of his near Canterbury, where Balsamo was to decorate the walls with frescoes. The frescoes were so original, and so amazing, that Balsamo thought it prudent to decamp,

and went with his wife to Paris to seek a fortune. But before taking the road, he ennobled himself, becoming the Marquis of Balsamo.

We are now at the close of the year 1772. The journey to Paris has been related by the fair Lorenza herself. 'On the passage to France,' she says, 'we made acquaintance with M. Duplessis, the steward of the Marquis de Prie, who showed us both all kinds of civilities. And when M. Balsamo showed him some of his works, he appeared surprised. "You will make your fortune in Paris," he said. "I am an advocate at the Parlement, and know many lords; don't distress yourself, I 'll present you to the king. You won't have to go on your travels again. Your wife is very pleasant, very pretty, very charming. I 'll do all I can to set you up in Paris."'

Arrived at Calais, Lorenza confessed to M. Duplessis, who was showing her more

and more attention, that she would have to remain at the port, having no money to continue her journey.

'Whereupon M. Duplessis made me all sorts of friendly promises, offering to drive me in his chaise to Paris.

'"And my husband?" I said.

'"Can't he wait a little at Calais? He will come on later."'

Lorenza, who knew the ropes, indignantly rejected this amazing proposition. At last it was agreed that she should join M. Duplessis in a postchaise he had hired, while her husband followed on horseback: fresh air and exercise could not fail to do him good.

Delightful journey! The Marquis of Balsamo admired nature in her autumn glory. The woods had put on their dress of russet brown. The birches and aspens had foliage of citron yellow, standing out vividly against the reddish brown of the

sturdier oaks. On the horizon, where fine white transparent vapours rose thinly into the sky, the woods were lost in the autumn mist. But, snug in the rolling postchaise, the windows closed—for the air was already cold, and the young woman had a delicate throat—the donna Lorenza sat by M. Duplessis' side; while Balsamo, now riding ahead, now behind or level with the carriage, galloped on in superb joyousness. He would sing snatches of Italian songs in his powerful voice, the sonorous notes swelling far into the echoless distance: and meanwhile, inside the closed carriage, M. Duplessis was whispering to Lorenza: 'You have stolen my heart away. I love you. You are young and beautiful; your skin is sweet and exhales a penetrating fragrance. My happiness is in your keeping. I make myself responsible for your fortune. I will never abandon you. When we are in Paris, I will get a place for Balsamo.

I will assure his happiness also. I will give him a hundred louis to take a trip to Rome.'

'Thus tormented against my will,' continues Lorenza, 'I was several times tempted to stop and leave M. Duplessis, in order to escape the solicitations and even the actual violence he showed me in the carriage, as evidence of his love; but knowing the irritable and fiery nature of my husband, I feared to inform him of what was going on by refusing to continue the journey, and we reached Paris in the morning.'

The same day, Duplessis lodged his travelling companions in the mansion of the Marquise de Prie, and in the evening, with the consent of Balsamo, who went to bed tired out with his journey, he took his wife to the opera.

'These attentions,' says Lorenza, 'lasted for six weeks or two months, and I cannot refrain from declaring that the generous

treatment of M. Duplessis, the tenderness he showed for me, his amorous expressions, his promises, made me conceive some kindness for him, all the more because my husband sometimes vexed me with his ill-temper and jealousy.'

Duplessis frequently invited the Balsamos to dinner. One Sunday evening, after dessert, Balsamo went off to pay a visit to one Mercuroz, an apothecary, leaving his wife and his host *tête-à-tête*: 'because,' notes Lorenza, 'my husband, though jealous, had confidence in me.'

Balsamo returned on the stroke of midnight. He had spent a delightful evening with his friend the apothecary. The wine had been wine of Samos, which had put the apothecary into an excellent temper; on this evening, no doubt, Balsamo had been the happiest of the three.

'From that time,' continues Lorenza, 'M. Duplessis showed me, every time he

met me alone, that he was jealous of my husband. He gave me to understand that I must separate from him, which wives in France were at liberty to do.'

The result was that apartments were taken for Lorenza by M. Duplessis with a woman named Théron, in the Rue Saint Honoré. But this did not at all suit Balsamo's book. His confidence in his wife did not reconcile him to being deprived of the advantages which his authority as husband, going at the right moment on a visit to the apothecary, was capable of obtaining for him. In January 1773 he laid an information before the lieutenant-general of police, and on February 2 the pretty Lorenza was ignominiously locked up at Sainte-Pélagie, along with many other women, all learning there in what way ladies in France were free to separate from their husbands.

In 1775, Balsamo turns up at Naples,

living in lordly style. His name is now the Marquis Pellegrino. It was in Pellegrini Street, it will be remembered, that he had met Lorenza six years before. He had a valet named Laroca, 'who had made himself famous by his adventures, and though really a perruquier, had himself played the marquis at Turin.' The Marquis Pellegrino taught how to make gold, how to change hemp into silk, and how to solidify mercury. From Naples he went with his wife to Malta, whence he returned to Naples with the chevalier of Acquino.

The year 1776 is the date of his second journey to London, where Balsamo took for the first time the name, since become so famous, of the Count de Cagliostro. This name was not absolutely imaginary. It was the name of one of his maternal great-uncles, originally of the little town of La Noava, eight leagues from Messina, who had been the factor of the prince of

Villafranca. Cagliostro then set up as an astrologer, and claimed to have succeeded, with the assistance of the stars, in reducing to a certainty the chances of winning in lotteries. He had a lawsuit with a lady of Chelsea named Fry, who accused him of purloining a necklace, and got him shut up in the King's Bench prison. Necklaces were evidently fated to bring him misfortune. Cagliostro said that the lady had given him the jewellery in reward for the accuracy of his forecasts in lotteries, but the lady declared that she had intrusted it to him because he had said that he could turn the small diamonds into large ones. The astrologer was ordered to give back the necklace. After a stay of six months in London, he took his departure. He left in his rooms a large portmanteau, filled, according to his own statement, with costly possessions. It was empty.

In 1779, Cagliostro made his fantastic

journey to Russia and Poland. The details of his marvellous performances and swindling tricks assume such proportions that it is impossible to credit them.

Early in 1780 the prophet arrived at Strasburg, clothed, as it were, in his mysterious reputation. He distributed drugs to the people who crowded into his house. At Strasburg, where he became acquainted with the Cardinal de Rohan, he remained three years and a half. In the middle of 1783, he travelled to Rome, Naples, Florence, Antibes. On December 1, 1783, he set up as a physician at Bordeaux. His cures were regarded as miraculous. The police were obliged to undertake the protection of his house, to avoid disturbances among the crowds who thronged to it. On his consulting days, eight or ten soldiers mounted guard at the door and on the staircase. On November 1, 1784, he is at Lyons, busied there more especially with

the organisation of masonic lodges. The mother lodge was founded at Lyons, and in a few months daughter lodges were swarming throughout France. On January 30, 1785, Cagliostro arrived in Paris: the negotiations for the Necklace had commenced.

Whence did he draw his resources at this period? On the one hand, from his Egyptian lodges, organised almost everywhere, each of which paid subscriptions contributing to his subsistence; on the other hand, from the Cardinal de Rohan. 'I remember,' says a manuscript note signed Rheinbold, written on a copy of Cagliostro's Letter to the English People, once in the possession of Xavier Marmier—'I remember that before the Necklace case, when the Cardinal de Rohan made his last journey to Strasburg, he sent him by one of his people a bag of 1200 to 1800 livres, and that Cagliostro, to give a gratuity to

the messenger, borrowed twelve livres from his host's cook, so destitute was he of money.' His wealth was thus more apparent than real. He cut a dash by a prodigious display of diamonds and jewels, —which were false.

V

A VISIT OF GOETHE TO PALERMO

As we have seen, Cagliostro, exiled from France after his acquittal by the Parlement, embarked for England on June 16.

While our hero was basking for the third time on the banks of Thames, Goethe, then travelling in Italy, came upon his family at Palermo. 'A little before the end of my journey,' notes the great writer under date April 13, 1787, 'an interesting adventure happened to me. During my stay at Palermo, I had often heard Cagliostro talked about at table, and stories told of him. The Palermites were all agreed on one point, to wit, that the mysterious personage was no other than a certain

Giuseppe Balsamo, who, after more than one piece of scoundrelism, had been driven from the town. He was recognised in the published portraits. I learnt thus that a jurist of Palermo, at the request of the French Ministry, had made inquiries into the origin of this man, who had had the audacity, in the course of a grave and momentous trial, to retail the most absurd fables in the face of all France—one may say, of the whole world.

'I asked to be introduced to the man of law, and was presented to him. He showed me the genealogical tree, drawn out by him, of the family to which Cagliostro belonged, and the notes and documents which had assisted him to compile a memoir, which he had just sent to France.' After perusing these, Goethe expressed the desire to be presented to Balsamo's mother and sister, who were living in the town. 'That will be difficult,' replied the lawyer, 'for they

are poor people and live a very retired life; a visitor would scare them.' But Goethe insisted, and at last the lawyer offered the assistance of his secretary, who knew the family personally. Goethe saw the secretary, and it was arranged that the visitor should pass as an Englishman bringing from London, where Cagliostro had taken refuge, news of him to his family.

The house inhabited by the Balsamos was hidden away in the corner of an alley, not far from the principal street, *il Casaro*. Goethe, accompanied by the secretary, climbed a wretched staircase, which led straight into the kitchen. A woman of middle height, apparently very robust, broad-chested without being stout, was washing dishes. She was neatly dressed, and, when she perceived her visitors, raised the corner of her apron so as to conceal its dirty side. Her eyes beamed a glad welcome, and addressing the secretary, she

said, 'Signor Giovanni, do you bring good news? Have you succeeded?' She alluded to some trifling business in which she was interested, and which the secretary had undertaken to manage for her.

'I haven't yet succeeded,' was the reply, 'but here is a friend of your brother's, who can tell you how he is just now.'

'You know my brother?' she asked, turning to Goethe.

'All Europe knows him,' replied the visitor, 'and no doubt you will be pleased to hear that he is for the present in perfect safety, and his health is excellent.'

'Come in,' she said, 'I will be with you immediately.'

The visitors went into a large and lofty room, which seemed to serve as lodging for the entire family. There was one window. The walls, still bearing traces of the paint that formerly covered them, were adorned with a number of religious pictures, portraits

of saints, all black in their gilt frames. Two large curtainless beds stood on one side; opposite them, a small brown cupboard like a writing-desk. The straw-chairs had had their backs gilded, and the gilt still shone here and there. The flooring had given way in several places. But everything was spotlessly clean. The visitors approached the family grouped around the window on the further side of the room.

While the secretary was bawling into the ear of Cagliostro's old mother, who was very deaf, an explanation of the stranger's visit, Goethe was taking stock of the persons and things around him. A girl of sixteen, comely, but marked with smallpox, was leaning at the window; near her a lad was stooping, his face not less pitted. On the other side of the window, extended on a long chair, was a person who seemed overcome with languor.

'We sat down,' says Goethe. 'The old woman addressed a few questions to me which I got my companion to translate, for she expressed herself in the pure Sicilian dialect. While she was speaking, I watched the old woman with pleasure. She was of middle height, but well formed. Her features were regular, and age had respected their pure and firm outlines. Her expression had that serenity which is usually found in deaf people. The tone of her voice was low and pleasant.' Goethe told her that her son had just been acquitted by the French courts, and was then in England, where he had been well received. 'Her replies were exclamations of joy, mingled with pious words that were very touching. And as she then spoke more slowly, I could almost understand her.' Meanwhile her daughter, Cagliostro's sister, the woman they had found washing the dishes, had re-entered. She sat down beside the secretary, getting

him to repeat what the stranger said. She had put on a clean apron, and carefully arranged her hair in a net. She seemed of a happy disposition, lively, and in robust health. I should take her age to be forty. Her blue and cheerful eyes gave a quick wide-awake glance around, without the least perceptible shade of mistrust. Seated, she appeared taller than when she was standing. She sat on her chair, her body bent slightly forward, and her hands on her knees. 'She closely resembled Cagliostro,' adds Goethe, 'as he is represented in the engravings that are so common. She questioned me on my plans for making excursions in Sicily, and told me that I must certainly return to Palermo to join them in the festival of St. Rosalia.'

Goethe resumed his conversation with the mother, while the daughter talked to the secretary. The latter said that her brother still owed her for purchases she had made

for him before he left Palermo. As he was now in possession of such great treasure, he must be able to return the money; and she asked the stranger to take charge of a letter for him. For her situation was precarious. She was a widow with three children; one daughter was being brought up in a convent, another daughter was at home, and a son was at present at school. She had her mother also with her, and was also saddled with the poor sick woman lying on the long chair. And in spite of all her industry, she found it very difficult to meet such obligations. 'To be sure,' she said in conclusion, 'God will not let my efforts go unrewarded, but the burden is too heavy, and I have borne it too long.'

The young people took part in the conversation, which had become animated. Goethe heard the old woman ask her daughter: 'Does he follow our holy religion?' And the younger woman

tactfully replied: 'The stranger seems well disposed to us, and it would hardly be polite to ask him that question so soon.'

And when the good people learnt that Goethe was soon to leave Palermo, they became pressing in their entreaties that he would return and spend with them the feast of St. Rosalia, the patron saint of the town. He would see in Palermo on that day unequalled splendours. The visitor took leave, with the promise to come back next day for the letter which Cagliostro's sister was to write to her brother. 'And I came away,' says Goethe, 'profoundly impressed with this pious and quiet family.'

Next day, after dinner, he returned alone. His appearance provoked surprise. The letter was not yet finished. 'Besides,' added the kindly folk, 'several of our relatives wish to make your acquaintance.' But Goethe assured them that he could not defer his departure for more than one day.

At this moment entered the son, whom the visitors had not seen on the former occasion. He held in his hand the letter for Cagliostro, which he had just fetched from the public scribe, whom it was the custom of the country to employ in such matters. The lad had a quiet manner, marked with reserve and melancholy. He spoke of his uncle, his wealth, his large expenditure, adding sadly: 'Why does he desert his family thus? It would be our greatest joy to see him back for a little at Palermo, showing some interest in us. And people say that he everywhere disowns us, posing as a lord of illustrious birth.'

The girl came in. She had lost the timidity of the previous evening, spoke of her uncle, gave the visitor many messages for him, and pressed Goethe to return to Palermo for the festival of St. Rosalia. The mother was as pressing as her children. 'Though it is not the proper thing for me

to entertain strange men,' she said, 'since I have a daughter growing up and we have good reasons for guarding against scandal as well as actual peril, I must say that you will always be very welcome among us when you return to the town.'

'Yes, indeed!' cried the young people: 'we will take Signor everywhere during the festival, and show him everything. We 'll sit in the best places for seeing and admiring the procession. How delighted Signor will be when he sees the great car, and especially the illuminations!'

Meanwhile the old woman had finished reading the letter for Cagliostro. She handed it to Goethe, saying: 'Tell my son how glad I was to have news of him; tell him that I press him to my heart'—and the good creature extended her arms and folded them across her bosom. 'Every day I pray God and the Blessed Virgin for him.

I send my blessing to him and his wife, and have only one desire—to see him once more before my death, with these eyes which have shed so many tears for him.'

In reporting these words Goethe remarks that they were rendered doubly impressive by the peculiar grace of the Italian tongue and the vivacity of the Sicilian dialect. 'And I left these good folk,' he adds, 'with a full heart. All hands were stretched towards me, and as I went down the stairs, the children rushed to the balcony running along in front of the window on the street. Thence they still called out to me, with joyous salutations, not to forget to come back. I reached the corner of the street, and for the last time saw them waving their hands to me.'

Goethe, who never saw the Balsamo family again, had an idea of sending them, before he left Palermo, the money owed by Cagliostro, justifying the gift by alleging

that the debtor would doubtless reimburse him on his return to London. But on examining his purse, he found that his funds were running low; and remembering that he had arranged to penetrate into the interior of Sicily, where the communications were very difficult, he was afraid of leaving himself penniless.

One wonders whether the poor good people, who put so much faith in the fortune of their absent relative, ever learnt the sequel of his adventures. Cagliostro fled from London in April 1787, driven away by his scandalous squabbles with the *Courrier de l'Europe*, which was published there. We can trace him to Basle, to Bienne in Switzerland, where he lived on a pension given him by one Sarrazin; thence to Aix in Savoy, Turin, Genoa, Verona, and finally to Rome, where he was arrested on December 27, 1789, by the *sbirri* of the Holy Office. He had just addressed a

petition to the National Assembly asking to be allowed to return to France. Thrown into the fortress of St. Angelo, he was tried as a freemason and condemned to death. His penalty was commuted by the Pope to perpetual imprisonment. While his wife, the pretty Donna Lorenza, was shut up in the convent of St. Apollinia, he himself was incarcerated in the castle of Leone in the duchy of Urbino, where he died on October 1, 1795.

Such an end makes us indulgent towards his extravagances and even his impostures. It is melancholy to think of these priests throwing a man into a lifelong dungeon simply because his beliefs differed from theirs.

At the same period in France, women, children, and old people were guillotined, though no crime could be charged against them except the most beautiful of virtues, loyalty to their sentiments. Priests in Rome,

Jacobins in Paris, were men of the same stamp. History unites them in one common anathema.

And Cagliostro's end may be regretted, not merely in the name of tolerance and freedom, our supreme faith, but even for the sake of the Revolution. The rôle of revolutionary alchemist would have been wonderfully interesting. At that period, when a man was only valued in France according to his eloquence or his antics, Cagliostro would have stood forth in the front rank, and his buffooneries would have formed pleasant interludes in the sombre and bloody monotony of crimes and horrors.

VI

TOUSSAINT DE BEAUSIRE

He belonged to an old burgher family of Paris, of some mark in their day, one of the streets being named after them in 1538 and retaining the name to the present time. His great-grandfather had been one of the capable architects of the seventeenth century, and academician in 1718. His grandfather, Jean Baptiste Augustin, who constructed the sewers from Ménilmontant to the Seine, organised the fêtes in honour of Louis xv. in 1744, and was elected a member of the Academy of Architecture. This man's son, another Jean Baptiste, had no inclination for the arts, and it was he who was the father of the Jean

Baptiste Toussaint who espoused Nicole Leguay.

Toussaint was born on November 6, 1761, in the parish of St. Cosmo, to Jean Baptiste de Beausire, royal lieutenant at the Salthouse, and Jeanne Félicité Lamoureux de La Genetière. In 1762 he unhappily lost his father, who was then residing in the Rue des Francs-Bourgeois ; and he lost his mother in 1771. Bereft of both parents by the age of ten, he was placed by his uncle and guardian, M. Bordenave, professor at the Royal Academy of Surgery and member of the Academy of Sciences, at the Collège de Justice, whence he passed to the Collège de la Marche on July 11, 1772. Beausire had very little taste for study, and turned his classrooms into a bear-garden. On March 3, 1775, he was locked up at Saint-Lazare for stealing sixty livres from his teacher's drawer. After a confinement of nearly two years he was sent back to the

Collège de la Marche. There he was supposed to study physics and law, to fit him for a procurator's place at the Châtelet; but on June 27, 1777, the Abbé Desfeux, director of the college, announced that on the preceding Sunday, between ten and eleven in the morning, young Beausire had absconded, in company with his cousin La Genetière, and taken refuge within the precincts of the Temple. He had carried off the greater part of his effects, not to mention the watch of one of his companions. When he had come to his last sou, the young fellow returned like the prodigal son to his guardian, who took him back to the Collège de la Marche; but the authorities refused to receive him again.

Bordenave, tired of the misconduct of his ward and hopeless of any improvement, asked to be relieved of his office. He became 'honorary guardian,' the active guardianship being intrusted to one Michel

François Bluteau, a citizen of Paris, whose specialty was to undertake such duties for a consideration.

We are now at the year 1780. Beausire was then placed with a certain Genevois, for a course of training for the military profession. A family meeting fixed his allowance at 4800 livres. The fortune left by his father was considerable for that time, and Beausire himself had at this date an income of nearly 30,000 livres. But in May 1781, the debts he had contracted amounted to as much as 95,000 francs. He assumed the title of count or chevalier, posed as a gentleman of the Prince of Condé's household, and swindled the tradesmen who supplied him with goods and jewels. But as Beausire was a very odd, amusing, pleasant fellow, a relative named Madame Destouches gave him a home, and began to take steps to secure his entrance as a volunteer into the navy. But the future

sailor soon had enough of the good lady, and returned to his quarters in the Temple.

He had a furnished lodging at the 'Two Crowns.' To obtain money for his necessities, he had put most of his clothes in pawn, and ordered new ones for which he omitted to pay. He incurred debts of honour also, which obtained for him the honour of being arrested by order of the Marshals of France and incarcerated in the prisons of the Abbaye Saint-Germain. We shall see what an incredible number of houses of detention Beausire went through in the course of his career. In comparison with him, Latude was a mere amateur. He was released after four months in jail, his family having paid 668 livres for him. Ten days had barely elapsed when he again took his watch to the pawnshop, engaged a servant, borrowed his watch under the pretext that his own was mending, and carried that also to the pawnbroker's.

On the Quai Pelletier there was a jeweller named Bourdillat, who had some gold rings and earrings that took Beausire's fancy.

'Ah, Master Bourdillat, if you only knew how charming Manon is!'

'I quite believe you, Monsieur le Chevalier.'

But as the chevalier had no money, he gave a bill payable on February 1. On January 24 he came back, with one of the earrings broken, and as Manon was not only charming but 'deucedly impatient'—

'Oh, they are all like that, Monsieur le Chevalier!'

So Beausire selected another pair of earrings, worth about fifty-eight livres, not paying for them, however, and came back in a few days for the one that had been repaired. Still he did not pay, and the bill being dishonoured on February 1, Bourdillat prosecuted him for swindling.

In March 1782, Beausire went to live

at Senlis with his brother-in-law, Maître Leclerc-Duport, who had succeeded Bordenave as honorary guardian. 'At the end of three months,' wrote Duport to the Provost of Paris, 'after having borrowed right and left and got jewellery from tradesmen on credit, Beausire absconded on July 15, taking with him everything he could lay hands on that could be turned into money in the capital.'

Fresh debts of honour brought Beausire again before the marshals, who sent him back to the Abbaye. At this period, 1783, the amount of his debts, speaking only of those which came to the knowledge of his family, had risen to 250,000 francs. Set at liberty after a detention of six months, he conceived the idea of procuring money by enlisting with three different recruiting officers, and drawing his bounty in advance. Then the Prince de Poix claimed him for his regiment of dragoons. Things began to look

serious. Maître de Senneville, a Parlement advocate, into whose hands his case was placed by his family, succeeded in obtaining an annulment, but before long, disgusted in his turn, he threw up the case. To free Beausire from his responsibilities to the other two recruiting officers, his family had him interned by *lettre de cachet* in the famous madhouse at Picpus, where he was joined a little later by Saint-Just.

In order to save what was left of his patrimony, half of which had been squandered in a few years, his relatives had him declared *non compos mentis* by the Châtelet on May 12, 1786, and an allowance of 4000 livres was settled on him. Beausire vehemently opposed this decree, and pursued with special hatred the architect Louis Moreau, the relative who had shown most severity towards him in the family councils.

Meanwhile Toussaint had met the charming little Nicole Leguay. The young people

were equally impecunious, but their debts added together gave an imposing figure. The Necklace affair came to light. From the Bastille, Madame de La Motte succeeded in warning her young friend, whom she called the Baronne d'Oliva. The lovers betook themselves arm-in-arm to Brussels, where they hoped to live cheaper than in Paris.

On October 17, 1785, Nicole and her lover were arrested in Brussels, and sent to the Bastille on November 2. On March 11, 1786, Beausire was liberated, but only to be consigned to the madhouse in accordance with the decree of the court. He was finally released in the month of August following.

And now he was married, and the father of a fine baby in whom all France was interested. Alas! marriage spelt good-bye to love. Is that the rule? On January 19, 1789, Louis Joron, king's counsellor, commissary of the Châtelet, heard a sad story. Marie Nicole Leguay, wife of Jean Baptiste

M.N. LECUAY D'OLIVA
Je donne, ou, je puis le dire, je m'honore dans ma misère, de donner pour être l'exemple de la probité la plus sévère et la plus rare?. Page 28 du Second Mémoire.

THE BARONNE D'OLIVA.

Toussaint de Beausire, esquire, related to him how, 'having come to know the said Beausire, he had become absolute master of her actions and will, as well as of her fortune and goods, so that there resulted a male child who was still living.' Nicole wept copiously. 'I was barely married before I experienced shocking treatment at the hands of my husband. He ill-used me, and beat me several times. He is leading the most scandalous life, passing his nights in gambling hells, and going with other women. And all this time I am confined to the house, where I am in absolute want. We live in the same house, but lodge separately—he in a fine front room, I in a poky little box behind. He rarely has his meals at home, and when he does, eats in another room. So far from giving me money to buy things, he has pawned all my linen and goods and jewellery. And now he wants me to go away, to retire into

a convent, but will not give me the means of subsistence. So, beside myself, I ran away last Monday, taking the few things for my personal use that were left, and went to the Hôtel Montpensier at the Palais Royal, where I had already stayed with him before our marriage, when he loved me. I 've come to sue my husband, so that the lieutenant-general of police, after appointing a convent to which I may retire, may compel him to give me an allowance that will enable me to live with my child.'

Nicole Leguay accordingly entered a convent. But there she fell into a decline. Country air was prescribed. She was taken to Fontenay-sous-Bois; but her constitution was ruined. She died on June 24, 1789, and was buried in the cemetery of Vincennes.

'She was very beautiful,' said Madame de La Motte, 'and very good, and very stupid.' And thus her fate is explained.

But we are waxing sentimental while already the revolutionary cannon are thundering.

Beausire was among the conquerors of the Bastille. We know how those honourable citizens who, for the most part, had had the modesty after the victory to run away and hide, became astonishingly numerous a few days later, when it was recognised that their deeds were brilliant achievements. This heroism was rewarded, in Beausire's case, by his selection to command the battalion of the district of the fathers of Nazareth. He gave his men a flag embroidered with a two-headed hydra crushed by an athlete, with the motto, proceeding from the gaping beak of a cock: 'He is scotched at last!' He also gave uniforms to three needy citizens. On October 5 he marched on Versailles. On June 21, 1791, 'the day of the tyrant's return,' he exclaims, he was constantly

under arms. The ardour he displayed on that memorable day was such that he caught a cold in his chest, which, checking the course of his exploits, compelled him to retire to the country. He settled at Choisy-on-Seine, where he married, on October 6, 1791, one Adelaide Duport, daughter of a hat-maker.

Unable to display his military valour, Beausire nevertheless cherished an undiminished ardour in the cause of liberty. At the time of the elections for the National Convention, he drew up a circular in favour of the right candidates.

Citizens!

The country is in danger! Her safety depends on us. Let us unite, and may our union be an impenetrable rampart against faction and intrigue! Despotism was about to enslave us anew. The good citizens have shown themselves, and the machinations of our tyrants are about to be unveiled. We were within an inch of ruin; court cabals and fanaticism had hollowed out the abyss. But for the energy and patriotism

of our brethren we should have been dashed over. The choice is between freedom and slavery, and on the choice you will make in your primary assemblies depends the fate of the empire. Let us rally as one man. Let personal interest be silent; let selfishness, that scourge of humanity, be annihilated!

This eloquence continues for a good space yet. Beausire had it stuck on a huge placard, and posted at his expense, not merely in his own commune, but in all the communes adjacent.

Will it surprise us to find that his fellow-citizens, filled with admiration, elected him procurator of the commune of Choisy-on-Seine? He did great things in his office: saw to the storing of grain; forced the farmers of the district, in the name of liberty, to thrash their corn, then bring it to market at Choisy; and brought to their senses the charcoal-burners who were awaiting a more favourable opportunity for selling their merchandise. He started public

assemblies, and inaugurated their sittings with a speech which has been preserved.

Citizens!

This is henceforth to be the place of your meetings. It was one of the appanages of the despots. It is destined to the reunion of several neighbouring communes, and you will all make one whole. Here men will come to drink in the maxims of liberty, which alone can assure the happiness of ourselves and our children. They will find in us friends and brothers; always watchful, incessantly attentive to the public good! If some one strayed from the inestimable principles of our holy revolution, your wise and paternal counsels would bring him back to the right path. Continue your labours, citizens, propagate the irrevocable and fundamental principles of our republic. Have an eye to the malevolent of every class, strengthen public spirit. The esteem of all good citizens will be the sweet recompense due to your zeal and devotion in the cause of liberty!

These brave words did not fall on deaf ears. On the third day of the second decade of Brumaire, in the Year II. of the

French Republic one and indivisible, the day of the festival of the Jerusalem Artichoke (November 3, 1793), some of the 'friends and brothers, always watchful, incessantly attentive to the public good,' as Beausire said, 'moved by the solicitude for the public good which made them direct an attentive eye on all that might contribute to foster and awaken republican ardour in the youth of France,' as they said themselves, denounced the Sieur Beausire to the Committee of Public Safety 'as a quondam noble, formerly attached to the quondam Comte d'Artois.'

No time was wasted. On the margin of the information are the words 'To be arrested.' On November 5, 1793, the procurator of the Commune of Choisy-on-Seine lay in the prison of the Luxembourg. Next day the Commune of Choisy, summoned by the sound of the bell, sent a deputation to the committee to demand the

release of their procurator, 'an honourable man and a strong republican.' But what did that matter? The deputation of twelve members, on arriving, could not have an audience of the committee at their morning sitting. Nine of them, retiring to the terrace of the Feuillants to dine and wait for the resumption of the sitting, were surrounded by an armed force and taken to the guard-house of the Convention. At eleven o'clock, five of them were set at liberty, but the other four were kept under lock and key. Their names were Barier, Nourrit, Joanis, and Chevillard. They were put through an interrogation.

'We have come to Paris to ask for the liberty of Citizen Beausire.'

Before the administrators of the police department, Citizen Deschamps, aide-de-camp to the Paris Militia, and Citizen Didier, juror on the revolutionary tribunal, declared: 'Barier, a notary of Choisy, is a

member of the quondam club of the Sainte-Chapelle; Nourrit, a painter of Choisy, highly approved the massacre of the Champ de Mars, and there exists against him an information to the People's Society; Joanis, commandant of the National Guards, has deliberately slandered the great patriots Marat and Robespierre; Chevillard, a coffee-house keeper, has withdrawn from the People's Society because that had approved the condemnation of the tyrant, telling several of the members that they were villains.' Poor Beausire's case was worse than before.

The four delegates were kept locked up until January 1794, and the inhabitants of Choisy-on-Seine were careful to send no more deputations.

To win his release Beausire thought that the best course was to denounce those of his companions in captivity who were imprudent enough to let fall compromising

words. This he did proudly, writing on July 30, 1794: 'I do not pine for liberty, since I have been able, even in my prison, to be useful to the commonwealth by revealing the plots that were in weaving there.' And as the Committee of Public Safety might consider it advisable to leave him in a position where he could do them such good service, he hastened to add: 'But I believe that I should be still more useful to my fellow-citizens elsewhere than here, and that it is which makes me desire the more ardently to be restored to my country.'

As this appeal met with no response, the prisoner returned to the charge on August 18: 'In the course of Ventose, I was lucky enough to discover the plots being hatched in prison by the Grammonts, the Dillons, and others. I denounced them; the traitors were punished, and I still remain in irons.'

Beausire found means in these circum-

stances to pay off an old score against that Louis Moreau who, as we have seen, did his best to curb his youthful follies. He included him in his denunciations, and brought him to the guillotine. 'I call the Supreme Being to witness,' wrote Moreau to the revolutionary tribunal on July 9, 1794, 'that no scheme whatever has come to my knowledge for laying sacrilegious hands on the representatives of the people. The witnesses can bring no evidence, nor even probabilities, against me. Citizen Beausire, my near relative, who spent a reprehensible youth, found me against him in our family councils. He owes the preservation of a part of his fortune to a decree of the courts we obtained against him. On that account he has conceived against me a hatred which would render him culpable, and the effect of which would to-day be fatal, if the equity of the jurors and of the tribunal, on whose judgment my

life depends, did not rectify it.' The poet Ducis, 'of the quondam French Academy,' intervened in his favour. 'Citizen Moreau,' he said, 'has always been submissive to the laws. He gave 30,000 livres towards the war against the brigands of La Vendée. He is married, and the father of a family. His wife and children are in tears.' It was labour lost. Moreau was condemned and executed, on the very day when he wrote the defence we have just read. He was an architect of great merit, who had early in his career obtained the diploma of the École de Rome, was admitted to the Academy in 1762, became director of the city fabrics in 1763, and architect to the king in 1783. It was he who designed the façade of the Palais Royal on the Rue Saint-Honoré.

We are reminded of a very similar case. While he was detained at Picpus,

Beausire had perhaps met there the great Saint-Just. Having attained power at this very time, Saint-Just had the pleasure of satisfying his rancour in the same way. One of his victims, Armand Brunet, wrote boldly on August 9, 1794, to the president of the National Convention—

Citizen President,

A prisoner of six months' duration, I venture to bring the following fact to your notice:—

Saint-Just, as bad a son as he is a citizen, had robbed his mother of her most valuable possessions. He had reviled and ill-treated her. I was asked by this hapless mother to obtain the imprisonment of her unnatural son, and he was confined at Picpus by order of de Crosne, then lieutenant-general of police. The hatred Saint-Just swore to me makes me regard him as the author of my arrest, my conscience being absolutely void of reproach.

Brunet was not mistaken. Saint-Just, to complete his work, had also brought the

excellent Thiroux de Crosne to the guillotine, who during his term of office as chief of police had perhaps had reason to reproach himself with being somewhat foolish, but certainly with being too kind.

Meanwhile Beausire, in spite of his zeal —and perhaps because his services in prison were so well appreciated—far from obtaining his liberty, was transferred to Sainte-Pélagie on August 12, to Plessis on November 8, to the Hospice of the Archbishopric on December 6, 1794, whence he was brought before the revolutionary tribunal on April 3, 1795. He was acquitted.

Beausire died many years later, on February 3, 1818, being then controller of taxes of Pas-de-Calais. He had become a devoted servant of the Empire, and retained his office at the Restoration. By his second wife, Adelaide Duport, he left six children.

In his excellent book, *Le Marquis de La Rouerie*, M. G. Lenôtre says : 'Secondary characters like Lalligand and Chévetel hold a more important place in the story of the Terror than most people think. The Revolution may be compared to a picture that needs new canvas. It has been so often painted, and painted again. To find what lies beneath, it must be turned over, the canvas must be picked off thread by thread, to show the original coat of colour. One might hold forth for a thousand years on the political ideas of Robespierre—who had none—on the legality of the trial of the king, on the official causes of the fall of the Girondins, without knowing the Revolution one whit better. You have to plunge into the depths. What is to be found there is worth bringing to the light.'

A slight place will perhaps be conceded to Beausire among the Lalligands and Chévetels, whose personalities M. Lenôtre

has brought to life again. Toussaint de Beausire appears to have been the average type of revolutionary. Others had a more brilliant fate: Mirabeau, because he spoke better; Carnot, because he was more intelligent; Saint-Just, because he was a still greater hypocrite; Robespierre, because he was clever at striking attitudes which at a distance produced a certain effect; but on examining them more closely you will find in each of them a Toussaint de Beausire. The value of the coin is greater, to be sure; the stamp is identical.

And with this observation, which will not perhaps meet with unquestioning approval, let us turn to Madame de La Motte.

VII

THE COUNTESS DE LA MOTTE AT THE SALPÉTRIÈRE

After the sentence on Jeanne de Valois had been executed, public opinion veered round in her favour; and the movement is duly noted in the journal of the bookseller Hardy. Such a revulsion is in fact almost a general law. Here is a woman guilty of a crime: at the first moment she is the object of bitter indignation; people clamour for her death; abandoned to the mob she would be lynched. Months pass by; the unhappy woman is incarcerated, and is now alone, feeble, deserted. It begins to be thought that the prosecution was merciless and the condemnation brutal, while re-

membrance of the crime is dulled, or it loses its horror as men's minds are familiarised with it. Ere long the public hear nothing but the pleadings of their own emotions and chivalrous sentiments. Is it certain that the woman was guilty? She had enemies. Some say she is a martyr.

The circumstances of Madame de La Motte's punishment had been horrible. They spread through Paris, and made a deep impression on the populace. People retailed her imprecations on the queen and the Cardinal de Rohan, her charges against them, her accusations against the Parlement, all honey and indulgence to people of importance, always ready to grovel to the court, the nobility, and the clergy. 'Hardly had the sentence on the Dame de La Motte been carried into execution,' writes Hardy, 'when a certain section of the public, touched with compassion, perhaps because they regarded her as the

victim of a court intrigue, ventured to blame the Parlement, believing that that court had shown undue severity in the matter. They endeavoured to bring its judgment into bad odour, and clamoured against the violence it had been compelled to employ.'

'It is not surprising,' we read in the *Memoirs* of the Princess de Lamballe, 'that Paris, which till this moment had delighted in the queen as in a beneficent divinity whose mere look carried consolation to the souls of the wretched, could not understand how she had abandoned Madame de La Motte to the horror of her fate; and as the Frenchman must go to extremes, he passed from idolatry to indignation. Public opinion began to vacillate, and the private enemies of this princess stimulated the discontent. The queen no longer saw the crowd pressing about her to catch a glimpse of her, no longer heard their flattering

murmurs of delight. No one told the queen that the coldness the crowd manifested towards her might have fatal results, and far from seeking to destroy it, she took offence. Her features, hitherto so sweet and caressing, expressed in public nothing but haughtiness and disdain for the opinion of those whom she never dreamt of regarding as able to dispose of her destiny and that of her family.'

Engravings in the picture-shops represented the countess in the costume of the Salpétrière: a dress of coarse grey drugget, with stockings of the same colour, a brown woollen petticoat, a round cap, a coarse linen chemise and a pair of sabots. The journals related the most trivial details of her life in prison. Only the most unfeeling could fail to be touched by them.

'The situation of the countess,' said the *Gazette d'Utrecht*, 'is beginning to interest even people who were most unmoved at

her punishment. It is quite a mistake to believe that the unfortunate woman enjoys any marks of preference over her companions in imprisonment. She is stretched on a bed of pain, which she steeps in her tears. It is true that beneficent hands have flown to her succour; but the custom prevailing in this house of distributing among all the inmates the marks of kindness intended by charitable souls for one of them results in her scarcely feeling any effects from the beneficence of those who wish to assist her. Her complexion is yellow. She has become extremely thin. She is mixed up with a crowd of women, the scum of nature and society, branded like herself, who yet have some consideration for the unhappy woman whom they call "the countess," and whom they endeavour to console. The Dame de La Motte weeps only for her lost honour, and not for her dreadful plight. She has to

sleep with three others, on a mattress terribly hard. She is obliged for the most part to pass the night on a bench; or, when awake, she does nothing but groan in a room where the windows are ten feet from the ground. There no light is ever seen, except the half-intercepted daylight. She wears the uniform of the establishment. She has only a few wretched dressing-jackets and round caps; but when they are worn out, she will have to be satisfied with fustian rags. Her food is black bread; on Sundays an ounce of meat, on Fridays a piece of cheese, on the other days some beans or lentils soaked in plenty of water.'

Anecdotes were told about her to bring tears to the eyes, and people did weep. She had written to the Archbishop of Paris a letter 'sublime in the picture of suffering she there draws, and in the piety and resignation she gives expression to. M. du Tillet, director of the General

Hospital, consoled her, exhorting her to dry her tears—

'I will dry my tears, sir, since you will have it so; but you will at least allow those of gratitude to flow.'

'The Dame de La Motte,' notes the *Gazette de Leyde*, 'is becoming more and more stoical and resigned to her fate. She employs herself the greater part of the day in reading and meditating on the ascetic book on the *Imitation of Jesus Christ*.'

In reading and meditating the *Imitation of Christ!*—and the queen dared to say that she was a criminal! She was a saint!

One of these anecdotes daily purveyed to the public set all Europe thrilling. It became known—and the gazettes were on the point of issuing special editions, though the use of big-type posters was not yet invented—it became known that the poor women at the Salpétrière, young and old,

thieves and light women, the scum of the human race, touched by so much virtue and resignation, by such kindliness and grace, had clubbed together, one going without her snuff, another not sending her fancy-man the usual three sous a week, in order to provide the countess with a variation from the usual *menu*—rye bread, boiled lentils and cheese—namely, a dish of peas and bacon.

Dear, simple, primitive souls! Christ, as the *Gazette de Hollande* eloquently observed, knew the human soul when, at Golgotha, scorning the rich, He bent His head towards the repentant thief.

And thus the rich and noble were piqued into emulation. The Salpétrière had not received so many and such brilliant visitors for many a long day: the Maréchale de Mouchy, the Duchess de Duras, Madame du Bourg, and a hundred others. An anonymous letter written from the house of

detention to the Baronne de Saint-Rémy, sister of Jeanne de Valois, said: 'All the grandees have been to see your sister; they all take her part. Who would not? God alone knows the truth and purity of her heart!' The Duke of Orleans, who was at the head of the Freemasons and preparing for his revolutionary part, saw what profit he might make of the business, and the duchess took the lead in this charming movement of compassion. 'Draw up a memorial to the Duchess of Orleans,' said the letter to Marie Anne de Saint-Rémy.

Naturally, there was some talk of plans of escape. One of them was especially picturesque. 'The countess,' said the *Gazette d'Utrecht* of August 1, 'has attempted to escape. She had already made a hole through which her head would go. She stuck in this opening, so that she could go neither forward nor backward.

Fright seized her: she struggled in vain, and her cries brought up the warders, who found her in that position. Her attempt has only increased the rigour of her detention.'

Among the compassionate souls so much touched by the fate of Jeanne de Valois, there was one who holds a peculiar place by reason of her delicious grace and kindliness.

Louise de Carignan was left at eighteen years the widow of a husband who had died of dissipation—Stanislas de Bourbon, Prince de Lamballe. 'The greatest beauty of Madame de Lamballe,' say the Goncourts, 'was the serenity of her features. The very brilliance of her eyes was restful. In spite of the shocks and the fever of a nervous ailment, there was not a wrinkle, not a cloud on her beautiful forehead, caressed by the long fair tresses which later on still curled about the pike. An Italian

by race, Madame de Lamballe had all the graces of the northern peoples. Her soul was as serene as her face. She was tender and caressing, always ready to make sacrifices, devoted in little things, disinterested above all. Her mind had the virtues of her temperament—tolerance, simplicity, amiability, quiet cheerfulness. Seeing no evil, and unwilling to believe in it, Madame de Lamballe fashioned things and the world to her own image, and banishing every evil thought by the charity of her illusions, her talk breathed unruffled peace and sweetness.'

The horrible fate of Madame de La Motte made a deep impression on the sensitive and excitable nature of the young princess. Her imagination took fire at the thought of a judicial error. She remembered having seen her respected father-in-law, the gentle and charitable Duke de Penthièvre, receiving Madame de La Motte at Châteauvilain with

the honours reserved for princesses of the blood. She was on intimate terms with her sister-in-law the Duchess of Orleans. She presided over masonic lodges. At this very time, feeling that the queen was a little neglected among the enmities springing up and growing dangerous around her, the Princess de Lamballe, who had quietly withdrawn before Madame de Polignac, returned to the side of the queen; and yet she could not refrain from bearing to the Salpétrière the consolations of her great heart. But natures like hers are not easily understood. The superior of the Salpétrière at this time was Madame Robin, known as Sister Victoire. One day Madame de Lamballe insisted on seeing the prisoner, relying on her rank as a princess of the blood to open all doors before her. Sister Victoire declined to allow her, believing that she was actuated merely by a vain curiosity which would only

have inflicted additional humiliation on the condemned woman.

'But why cannot I see Madame de La Motte?'

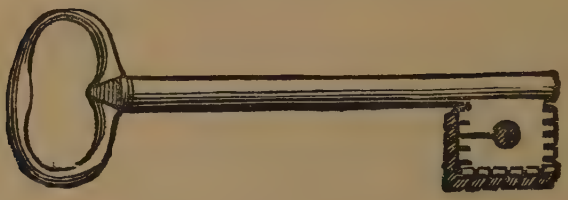
'Because, madame, that is not part of her sentence.'

VIII

THE ESCAPE

Madame de La Motte was attended at the Salpétrière by one of the prisoners, a girl named Angélique, who had been condemned to perpetual imprisonment for having in the despair of desertion killed her child. About the end of November 1786, a sentry on duty in one of the court-yards of the hospital, passing the stock of his musket through a broken pane of glass, wakened Angélique sleeping within. The soldier told her that some one was scheming to set her and her mistress free. Next day he handed her a note written in sympathetic ink, the writing of which she made visible by holding it to

the fire. This was the beginning of a correspondence. 'The important thing is,' said the unknown benefactor, who had taken the fate of Jeanne de Valois to heart, 'to obtain a model of the key opening the gate by which the prisoner will have to go out.' But how was this model to be procured? Jeanne had the idea to examine carefully every day the key hanging from the bunch of the nun who came to visit her. Then, when the good sister had left her, she tried to draw an exact reproduction of it on a blank sheet of paper. Next day she would examine it again, and correct her drawing in one point or another. The hole in the lock gave the dimensions of the key. Jeanne considered at last that her drawing, after being touched up more than twenty times, ought to be pretty exact. She had it passed to the sentry, and he, a few days afterwards, brought back a key which opened the lock.



One after another, the sentinel had conveyed to her the various parts of a disguise—coat, breeches, and hat. Meanwhile Angélique, who was to have been a lifelong prisoner, had been set at liberty, and another prisoner, named Marianne, wife of Desrues the poisoner, was given as a servant to Madame de La Motte. But some time elapsed without a reappearance on the part of the sentry, and Madame de La Motte was becoming alarmed, when she received by the same channel a note which said: 'Your dear Angélique is free; name the day when you want to be free too.'

'The 5th of June' was her reply. She knew that on that day Sister Fanchon, whose duty it was to shut the doors along

THE FLIGHT FROM THE SALPÉTRIÈRE.

the corridor, was going to the Bois de Vincennes.

She put on her disguise: a frock coat of royal blue, black vest, and breeches, a tall round hat; she took a light walking-stick and put on a pair of skin gloves. The key opened the doors. The two fugitives reached the courtyard, where they mingled with the crowd. They knew that they were to make for the Seine, where a boat with two men on board was awaiting them. They found the boat, and took their places. The men rowed rapidly to Charenton; on the bank was a fiacre to drive them to Maison-Rouge, where they passed the first night.

Provins was the second stage. In the streets of the little town, a group of officers, staring at the young women, saw through the disguise. One of them left the rest.

'My fine cavalier, were you to lead me to the pit of hell I 'd follow you,' he said.

Madame de La Motte was speechless with anxiety.

'I see what it is,' continued the soldier. 'You 're a young lady running away from the convent, and going to join the happy man who has your heart.'

'Sir, if you are so sure of it, please don't follow me. Isn't your persistence indiscreet?'

Clearly an indiscretion. The gallant strode away.

Taking warning by the incident, Madame de La Motte judged it prudent to throw off her disguise. Marianne bought at a shop in the town some things suitable to a countrywoman—a basket, some butter and eggs.

A league from Provins, rows of greyish willows edge the banks of the Voulzie, which flows on, a clear and merry stream, between green meadows. Clumps of rushes and long grasses form curtains in which

the wind rustles. There the two fugitives found a hiding-place. Their male attire was tied up in a bundle, a stone was fastened to it, and it was thrown into deep water. And here is Jeanne walking on the highroad, a country peasant woman, with short petticoats, looking very dainty in her many-laced linen bodice, her cloth apron, her petticoat of calamanco with stripes of blue, pink, and white, her little feet in a clumsy pair of shoes with shining buckles. She has in her basket some fresh butter and white eggs she is going to sell at the next market. Passing peasants hail the fresh, pretty, laughing girl, and give her a lift in their waggons. And thus she comes to Troyes, whence she reaches the environs of Bar-sur-Aube.

She arrived at the Crottières, open quarries whence is extracted the ragstone of which many of the houses in the town are constructed. The Crottières served as

an asylum to vagabonds and tramps. A little fir copse divides them from the road that leads from Bar-sur-Aube to Clairvaux. From this height you get a view of the town encircled by the shining arms of the Aube, behind the village of Fontaine, so picturesque with its old bridge and its whirling, clicking mills. There the Bresse flows up to join it, like a ribbon gleaming in the luxuriant grass, and plaiting itself capriciously with the quivering ranks of reeds. And in the distance the hills of Sainte-Germaine arch themselves into a sombre cupola, St. Peter's showing the graceful outlines of its pointed spire. In the darkness of the Crottières the fugitive lay hidden. She sent Marianne with notes to relatives and old friends whom she knew in Bar-sur-Aube. M. de Surmont, who had taken her into his house many years before when she fled from the convent of Longchamp, came to her at night. They

MADAME DE LA MOTTE IN PEASANT COSTUME.

sat talking by the roadside. He left her some money. 'When the hapless woman,' says Beugnot, 'fleeing from the Salpétrière, hid herself in the quarries during the night, my mother, who had never ceased to maintain her innocence, even after the judgment, had the courage to go and seek her there. She restored to her a gift of twenty louis which the countess had intrusted to her for the relief of distress in the time of her prosperity. She did more. She raised the poor disgraced woman in her own eyes, by bringing her own purity and virtue in contact with her.'

From Bar-sur-Aube, Jeanne and her faithful companion reached Lorraine, Nancy, then Lunéville, then Metz, Thionville, Ettingen and Hollerich, in the grand-duchy of Luxembourg, where they were received by a lady named Schilz. Through Belgium, by Bruges and Ostend, they at last gained the shores of England, and from

Dover posted to London, where Madame de La Motte was able to throw herself into the arms of her husband, on August 4, 1787, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

What mysterious hand had favoured her flight? She never knew. The opinion of the time was that the queen herself had opened a way of escape. Madame Campan had no suspicion of it. 'Through a series of misapprehensions which guided the proceedings of the court, it was found that the cardinal and the woman La Motte were equally guilty but unequally punished, and they wished to redress the balance. This new crime confirmed the Parisians in the idea that this creature, who had never succeeded in penetrating even so far as the antechamber of the queen's women, had really awakened the interest of that unfortunate princess.'

IX

MADAME DE LA MOTTE WRITES THE STORY OF HER LIFE

The Countess de La Motte rejoined her husband in London on August 4, 1787. 'Several times, during the period I spent with her,' writes the count, 'she tried to destroy herself, and for mere trifles, the most insignificant vexations. Twice I held her back by her clothes when she attempted to fling herself out of window. When she rejoined me in London, I avoided all occasions of causing her the least annoyance. I quickly perceived that the great misfortunes she had suffered had much embittered her temper, and that tact and caution were needed to keep her in good

humour. In spite of all my patience I could not help saying one day that her woes were all caused by her own waywardness and extravagances. I had no sooner uttered the words than she flung herself on a dagger she happened to be holding in her hand, and, despite my promptitude in running to her, along with the people who were in the house, we could not prevent her from striking herself below the breast, and we saw her fall helpless to the floor.'

Husband and wife were in extreme poverty. La Motte, spendthrift as he was, had not been long in getting rid of all the money and jewels he had taken from the jeweller Gray after his flight from Bar-sur-Aube in 1785. An English lord, touched with compassion for the pitiable victim of a judicial error, gave a pension to the countess, and she found a second protector in Charles Alexandre de Calonne,

the former controller-general of the finances, who had worked actively to secure the acquittal of the cardinal from a desire to wound the queen, and who, as we shall see, exerted himself by and by to deal Marie Antoinette the final blow. Jeanne was at this time thirty-one years old, and as pretty, lively, and piquant as ever. Old Calonne became quite sparkish again. And his hatred for the queen was thus blent with his attachment to the little countess, a conjunction destined to produce the most monstrous of collaborations.

The Necklace case had made a tremendous sensation throughout Europe, and especially in England. A book by Madame de La Motte relating the story in full detail was sure to be a success which would provide her with the means of subsistence. As her style was hopelessly defective, Calonne introduced to her Serre de Latour, a French journalist who had taken refuge

in London after running away with the wife of the *intendant* of Auvergne, and was there editing the *Courrier de l'Europe*, a news-sheet financed by a speculator named Swinton. And Calonne put his own services at her disposal.

The tide of slander was rising around Marie Antoinette. 'Listen,' write the Goncourts, 'listen to a nation's whispers and murmurs, rising, falling, falling, rising, between the Markets and Versailles, between Versailles and the Markets. Listen to the populace, listen to the chair-bearers, listen to the courtiers bringing calumny from Marly and then post-haste to Paris! Listen to the marquises in the actresses' dressing-rooms, in the drawing-rooms of the Sophie Arnoulds and the Contats, of harlots and opera-girls. Interrogate the street, the ante-room, the salons, the court, the royal family itself. Calumny is everywhere, even at the very skirts of

the queen.' And what fuel the pen of the countess was about to furnish to the fire! It was dreaded at Versailles. Madame de La Motte and Calonne were being watched. The Duchess of Polignac set out for London, and condescended to negotiate with the La Mottes, offering them money. But Jeanne worked herself up to a fine pitch of indignation, and made preposterous demands. She claimed her rehabilitation, in addition to the money and all that had been taken from her. Her *Memoirs* appeared.

'I can attest,' wrote Madame Campan, 'that I saw in the queen's hands a manuscript of the *Memoirs* of the woman La Motte, brought her from London: it was corrected by the hand of Calonne himself at every place where total ignorance of the customs of the court had made her commit gross blunders.' 'M. de Latour,' writes the Count de La Motte on the other hand, 'handed the manuscript to M. de Calonne,

who made changes and corrections and additions without number, almost on every page: all these corrections were written with his own hand, and for the most part in pencil.'

In the course of her examinations at the Bastille, Jeanne de Valois had declared that the Necklace had been stolen by Cagliostro. Afterwards, before the Parlement, she asserted that the robber was the Cardinal de Rohan. 'In the matter of the Necklace,' she had written when on the point of appearing before her judges, 'it is an undoubted fact that the king and queen had several years ago refused to purchase it. If it was true that the queen had taken a new fancy for the jewel, she could have got it without any mystery with the funds at her disposal.'

But she once more changed her tune. In her *Mémoire justificatif* she declared that the Necklace had been taken by the queen.

An extract will enable the reader to appreciate the *Mémoire justificatif*. 'I need no longer put any restraint on myself,' wrote Madame de La Motte. 'I suppose myself at this moment in regions of independence and peace, where my sufferings will, I hope, win me a place, relating, without prejudice as without passion, to the celestial throng the sad dreams I have had on earth.'

The Cardinal de Rohan, as we know, had only arrived in Vienna as ambassador a year after the departure of Marie Antoinette to become the wife of the dauphin, afterwards Louis XVI. Obviously, then, he could not have seen the young archduchess there. This was no obstacle to the following paragraph, in Jeanne de La Motte's dispassionate story to the 'celestial throng':—

The Cardinal de Rohan told me, and repeated to me several times, that the grievances of Her Majesty rested on a poor foundation. He confided to me that, at the time when he was

ambassador at Venice, the queen was still an archduchess. Emboldened by the lightness of her conduct, he had ventured to offer his homage, which was not rejected. His happiness had passed as a dream. The marked favours obtained by a German officer had turned his head till he allowed himself to drop most indiscreet remarks.

This extract will give an idea of the tone and the veracity of the work, which was presented to the public under the guise of the finest sentiments—'my sensitiveness and delicate notions of honour,' said Jeanne. The book also derived something from the persuasive faculty which she undoubtedly possessed. Eight thousand copies were printed, and in a short time more than seven thousand had been disposed of. It was at once translated into English and German. In Germany it appeared in two different editions, one published by the booksellers of Brunswick, the other by those of Nüremberg.

'In London,' writes M. Pierre de Nolhac, 'Madame de La Motte published her odious *Memoirs*, a medley of passion and falsehood, which dragged the crown into the mud of the gutter. Between the queen's word and the word of the adventuress France hesitated. Ere long she ventured to make her choice, and the pamphlets of this woman caused the definitive acceptance of the legend of Marie Antoinette's vices. It was in them that Fouquier-Tinville afterwards found his arguments, on them that he based the justice of his cause.' 'At the court, as well as in the city,' said Maître Labori in a speech at the advocates' conference in 1888, 'every one showed himself ready to credit the queen with every form of wickedness and vice, and the legend of her debaucheries has not even yet disappeared from history.'

And yet Maître Labori himself, devoted as he is to the memory of Marie Antoinette,

admits that the countess must have had relations with her. We affirm, on the contrary, that she never had with the queen any connection whatever, of any sort, at any time. The queen never even saw her. Marie Antoinette wrote on August 22, 1785, to her brother Joseph II.: 'This adventuress of the lowest class has no place here, and has never had access to my presence.' 'At the time of the trial,' says Madame Campan, 'the queen sent for some of the engravings representing Madame de La Motte. She never even remembered seeing her pass through the gallery at Versailles, which was open to the public, and where Madame de La Motte often showed herself.'

What did Rosalie, the countess's maid, say at the preliminary inquiry?

'I never heard anybody in the house speak of any relations between Madame de La Motte and the queen.'

What did Mademoiselle Colson, her companion, say?

'I spent two years with Madame de La Motte' (at the very time of the Necklace intrigue) 'and never saw or heard anything to lead me to infer that there were relations between the queen and the countess.'

What did Marie Anne de Saint-Rémy, Jeanne's sister, declare to the Abbé Bew, who sent her to his cousin Bew the bookseller in London, the publisher of Madame de La Motte's *Memoirs*?

'Yes, sir, my sister herself told me that the letters in her *Memoirs* were forged, and that the greater part of the book was false. And for myself, sir, I confidently affirm that my sister never had an interview with the queen, and that the whole story is absurd.'

And what did Madame de La Motte herself declare, in her letters and cross-examination, and in the memorials she got her advocate to draw up? 'I never had

the honour of seeing the queen.' 'I never flattered myself on having any credit with the queen.' 'I know nobody who was in the queen's suite.' 'The Dame de La Motte,' said her advocate Maître Doillot, 'in spite of a name everywhere recognised, was not known at court, and had no relations, public or private, with the sovereign.' And further: 'Is there any need to speak of another fable, that intercourse with the queen of which Madame de La Motte is said to have boasted as of a secret correspondence? The countess would be highly culpable if the allegation were true, since it is an honour she never had. She humbly beseeches her judges attentively to listen to the reading of the depositions in regard to this fable, and to mark with special attention the firm tone in which she has denied it.'

After such a mass of corroborative testimony, can the least doubt still remain?

The appearance of the *Memoirs* had for its first result the loss of the protection and the subsidies of the English lord, who had poured out his heart and his purse at the knees of this poor martyr of the French courts. He was, it appears, a man of good sense, and the victim of the judicial error appeared to him thenceforth less interesting.

After breaking with the lord, she quarrelled with Calonne. There was an exciting scene. The two lovers were playing at piquet. After a decisive stroke the ex-minister cried, 'Madame, you are marked!' The unintentional allusion cut like a knife. The countess had a hasty temper. Quick as lightning, she overturned the table, dashed at her partner, and then, 'with the fair hands which hitherto had only stroked the face of the old beau,' she left some deep marks of her fury.

The Count de La Motte had had enough

of it. He took advantage of the disorders following on the events of the 14th of July to desert his wife and return to Paris. He arrived there on August 18, 1789. From that day, the correspondence of Madame de La Motte with her husband and sister, the latter in retirement at the Abbey of Jarcy, furnishes most valuable information.

Marie Anne de Rémy, described as a buxom creature, fair, dull, sweet-tempered and indolent, was in every respect the opposite of her sister. When, on June 2, 1786, she heard of her sister's condemnation, in her grief she swallowed a phial of poison. The Abbess of Jarcy administered remedies for twelve hours in succession, while the young woman was contorted with frightful pain. She recovered, and on September 20, 1787, the Abbé Pfaff wrote to the Countess de La Motte in London about her :—

'When you ask your sister for help, I see that you are ignorant of her sad con-

dition. Her state of health is worse than death. The different poisons she has swallowed on as many as four occasions since June 2 last year, and especially on that day, owing to her despair about you, have led to such a state of continual suffering and depression of spirits that it is impossible to imagine a condition more grievous and pitiable. And in addition she continues to be in great want.' All she had to live on was her pension of 800 livres. After the condemnation of Madame de La Motte, Louis XVI. increased it by 2700 livres from the privy purse.

The letters addressed by Marie Anne to her sister Jeanne from the moment when the latter, deserted by her husband, remained alone in London, in abject poverty, are quite touching.

'Your husband,' she wrote early in December 1789, 'has left you in distress. He is in Paris, where he is said to be

telling the most shameful tales about you. Poor thing! These are the people, with their bad company and their evil counsels, who have ruined you! The *Memoirs* they are ascribing to you, which your husband has put your name to without putting his own, so that he can disown them and let you bear the odium, have done you much harm. Many people who, like myself, believed you to be innocent, as you assured me you were in the Bastille, have been astonished at these *Memoirs*. I can't believe my sister capable of the horrors they contain, for they contain horrible things against my father, and are full of lies.' She adds that she intends to leave France, and pleads with Jeanne to come with her. Madame de La Motte had informed her that she was working at some fresh writings, at a long narrative in which she would unfold the whole story of her life, and which would make a sensation.

'You say in your letter that you are writing your life. Alas! what good will that be? It is said you are only doing all this to gain money. Is that how a Valois should try to regain public esteem?'

Marie Anne ended with an entreaty: 'Listen to the voice of honour and truth. Don't reject what I say. It is the heart that speaks to you, the only heart still left to you, which tells you that silence is better than all these memoirs in which you are ruining yourself. If you will return to your better mind and follow my advice, you will find in your sister a true friend, who only wishes your good, and will gladly share with you all that she has. And I would suggest that we should finish our days together, and retire to Switzerland or Italy, or to some German principality, where we should be happy and free and, above all, unknown. With my little fortune, we shall be able to live very decently in the

countries where life is cheap. Alas! my poor dear, how I wish this plan might please you! I would give everything in the world for that to be, and I should be happy to have my sister with me, recovered from her errors, and to live together till death.'

Madame de La Motte replied with a reference to the Almighty, and Marie Anne, from her bed, where she was kept by her weakness and anxiety, wrote again on December 15, 1789 :—

'I have just received your beautiful and godly letter, which did not surprise me, because I have never doubted your good feelings so long as you are away from bad company : but I *am* surprised by your confession that you really have published the *Memoirs*, whereby you show yourself so very culpable and forgetful of the God you have to-day so often at the point of your pen.' She goes on to speak of the evil reports

La Motte is spreading about his wife in Paris. He is leading a gay life at the Palais Royal, in a very expensive suite on the second floor.

'I hope your distress may not be worse than his,' says Marie Anne. 'Poor thing! In spite of your approval of him, I can't bring myself to pardon the principal author of my poor sister's troubles. I might also invoke the name of God, like you, and, without probing deeper into this dreadful business, tell you constantly that God is good and merciful, that you must hope in His loving-kindness, and that He will not refuse His favour to the submissive and repentant child, as you say so well. Well, my sister, why, with such beautiful religious sentiments, why want always to set people talking about you, by all these writings, which will end in ruining you before God and men? With true repentance you may yet hope, as you say, to be pitied and

respected; but, I tell you, you will not do it by these *Memoirs*. I am your sister and friend, don't spurn my advice; and since you tell me I am your consolation, and I ask nothing better than to help to make you happy, it all depends on yourself. I would give my life to succeed in this, my dear sister. Renounce, I beseech you, these dreadful memoirs of yours.

'I am much disappointed to see that you do not approve my suggestion that we should spend the remainder of our days together—since you do not answer on that point. Alone, in a free country, where we were unknown, we could live respectably. I confess that, though I repeat the suggestion, I fear you will still oppose it. However, I don't want to force your inclinations. What I say to you is said at the dictation of love and honour, and unhappily you do not always understand what those words mean. But I shall never reproach you.

Let us bury the past! But the present should guide our future course. I blame nobody but the wretches who have led you so deep into wrong-doing. I should be overwhelmed with joy if my sister at last recognised my affection and had some confidence in her only friend.

'Poor sister! Remember once for all that your greatest enemy now is yourself, and that your one friend is myself, offering you everything I have!

'It is said that the city will soon resume its payments, and I shall get my eighteen months' arrears. Then I will send you something, and you will rejoin me, or I will come to you if you like, and we will retire to some spot where we can still live and be happy, if you will but try.

'Good-bye, good-bye. I send my best love.'

And what did Madame de La Motte reply to these words, sprung from so real

a feeling, so sincere an affection? We have none of her letters to Marie Anne, but we have those she wrote to her husband. In these she shows herself as she was; we see her at last in her true colours.

'I was in such haste to catch the post,' she wrote on January 11, 1790, 'that I had no time to give you any details concerning the *moissonneuse*'[1] (thus she calls her sister). 'I have received only two letters from her' (the two we have just read). 'In the first she suggests that we should spend our last days together, in Switzerland or Italy where living is cheap; says she would be happy if I approved her scheme; but advises me to stop publishing memoirs, and says she wants to know how I am placed, so that she can help me. She tells me that people in Paris are saying you have deserted me, and a hundred other horrors. As I know

[1] Properly a reaper, harvester.

these precious humbugs, I don't care a rap for them. And so I have made a very brief reply, and asked nothing for myself, but only ten guineas for that monster Angélique.'

The 'monster Angélique' was the girl who while a prisoner in the Salpétrière had devoted herself to the countess's service. Like Marianne, the companion of Madame de La Motte's flight, she had joined the countess in England. Both had taken service with her. But as the lady did not pay them their wages, and they were scandalised at what went on in the house, they had left her. And Angélique was demanding her wages so that she might return to France.

'A second letter,' continues Madame de La Motte, 'arrived on December 15: *disgraceful.*'

This is the letter we have just transcribed; the word *disgraceful* is underlined.

'A hundred more offers, to be fulfilled only on one condition: that there are no more memoirs. In short, she treats me horribly badly. And you are the hero of the business; fancy, you are the sole author of it all; and so she runs on with expressions worthy of such a pair of knaves' (her sister, and the abbé Pfaff, who pitied her condition and was trying to do something for her). 'Accustomed to deceive everybody, they are really working for my enemies, as I have told them.'

She goes on to say that the abbé had come to see her in London.

'He came on Sunday, December 27, at five in the afternoon. He embraced me —his breath stank like the plague—and shook hands in English fashion. He remained till ten o'clock, and came again next day.

'The same impudent rogue, seeing that I abused my sister so roundly in regard to all

the money she enjoys since my misfortunes, and that it little becomes her, in making offers, to add conditions to them, when everything she has is mine; he answered that that was not true, that it was the king who had given it to her. But the king has only given what belongs to us. She has an income of 3200 livres, which are certainly the 35,000 livres from the Bastille.'

(Louis XVI. had indeed thought at first of giving the 30,000—not 35,000—livres, which the stolen Necklace had produced, to Marie Anne; but the Cardinal de Rohan having opposed the plan, he had given her a pension of 2700 livres from his privy purse.)

'And this monster,' continues Madame de La Motte, speaking of Marie Anne, 'has had the heart not to come to her sister's help, but is supporting a rogue. Ah! he' (the abbé Pfaff) 'is costing her dear! He told me they had three children; and that

they were paying 800 livres for their rooms. He occupies the back and she the front. He goes to her as soon as the servants are in bed, through a passage under the staircase, which leads to a little room belonging to the *moissonneuse* near her bedroom.'

It is unnecessary to remark that all these details are the product of Madame de La Motte's imagination. She went out of her way to spread these stories and to write them for every one to read.

And she had found a means to procure the money she so badly needed. 'I shall send to my sister's,' she wrote to her husband, 'to get her desk opened and to steal 9500 livres.'

This curious letter, so useful in fixing Madame de La Motte's character, is valuable too for the lines with which it closes. No further proof, to be sure, is required

that Jeanne stole and broke up the Necklace. The accumulation of facts is overwhelming. But it is interesting to have a formal confession from her own hand. In the *Memoirs* compiled and published by herself we read :—

> The cardinal's line of defence bore only on the alleged eagerness of M. de La Motte to carry off, not only his diamonds, but also mine, with our silver plate, lace, and all the valuable things we had ; ought not Madame de Surmont to have declared (Madame de Surmont was M. de La Motte's aunt, who had years ago taken Jeanne de Valois into her house at Bar-sur-Aube) that it was false that M. de La Motte had carried off those things with the idea of taking flight, since he had intrusted them to her safe keeping ?

And further, in her letter of January 11, 1790, to her husband, Madame de La Motte writes :—

> And don't forget that jade Madame de Surmont. For she, my love, she is the cause of our misfortunes. Don't spare her, for God's sake !

If I only could, I don't know what I wouldn't do to her. Remember that if she had only given up our diamonds at the proper time, what would there have been to condemn us?

The diamonds handed over by Madame de Surmont were shown to Jeanne de Valois in the Bastille. In his still unpublished *Memoirs*, the Count de La Motte writes :—

These earrings (jewels taken in exchange in London by La Motte for the diamonds of the Necklace) had remained at Bar-sur-Aube, with various other things, as well as all the jewels and diamonds belonging to Madame de La Motte and me. All these things were shown to Madame de La Motte when she was examined and cross-examined.

The correspondence of Jeanne and her husband went on. She remarks on her sadness and her constantly increasing poverty. 'Sorrow is incessantly crushing me, reducing me to a skeleton.' Again :

'I am very ill, my love, the bile is torturing me and sorrow eating my heart out; but courage still keeps me alive, the hope of conquering my enemies still sustains me.' The count appears in no better plight, but Jeanne roughly stirs him up: 'O my love, drop all that weak talk about blowing out your brains. Really, you are a disgrace to your sex.' He must live, and she gives him the reason: 'Live, I tell you. For myself, I 'd rather become a servant than give my enemies pleasure by dying.'

X

THE PAMPHLETS

It was about this time, towards the end of 1789, that two violent booklets appeared, written by Jeanne de Valois, or at any rate issued in her name. They made a great sensation. These were her *Letter to the Queen of France* and her *Petition to the Nation and the National Assembly for the Revision of her Trial.* 'Odious, traitorous woman,' she wrote to Marie Antoinette, 'listen, and read me, if you can, without trembling. Ah, how you must blush, you who have been so long familiar with crime and shame. . . . 'Tis from the depths of the dark abyss, whither I have fled for shelter from your rage, that I address to you the utterance of

a heart weighed down by grief.' There is no need to quote further. To the nation and the Assembly Jeanne said: 'It is come, that moment so much desired, that moment for which I would have given a thousand lives! . . . Yes, Frenchmen, whatever your love of liberty may be, my soul can still challenge yours. You have not, like me, suffered the tortures of Despotism after having felt its perfidious caresses. . . . Tremble, ye villains; I am about to appear in the arena. And I will cause to appear with me her (the queen) who has so infamously sacrificed me.'

Jeanne was in fact getting ready to serve up for Marie Antoinette, and all her enemies, real or imaginary, a new dish of her own invention. This was the *Story of My Life*, the great work in which all who had not behaved as she would have wished were about to be vilified in her most accomplished style. Bew the bookseller

hoped to create a great scandal. He advanced two hundred and fifty pounds on receiving the manuscript. Two editions, one in French, the other in English, both illustrated, were to appear simultaneously.

Meanwhile the Revolution was progressing. 'I know,' wrote Madame de La Motte to her husband on December 14, 1790, 'that there are many journals in Paris speaking in my favour.' And she adds, in her curious style, so incorrect, but singularly expressive: 'After a certain fine character that we got put a month ago into the papers for the queen, I don't doubt there'd be some one who, for a fortune, would desire that I should disavow that she is the dark original, so as to win back for her the affection of the people; but on my life, for all the crowns in the world, I shall not disavow what I have said of her, and if she is only white through me, she will be all her life as black as the chimney.'

Je suis le véritable père Ducheine, foutre.

GRANDE VISITE
DE
MADAME LAMOTTE
AU
PERE DUCHÊSNE,
MALADE,

SON ÉTONNEMENT DE TROUVER AUPRÈS DE SON LIT UN BROC DE VIN POUR PTISANNE. GRAND MALHEUR QUI LEUR ARRIVE. DESCRIPTION DE SA CHAMBRE.

MADAME Lamotte douée de ce caractere ſenſible, qui eſt ordinairement le partage des femmes galantes, ſut très-fâchée de l'accident

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THE GRANDE VISITE DE MME. DE LA MOTTE
AU PÈRE DUCHESNE MALADE

And meanwhile Madame is compiling her book in a manner to command success. 'I am highly flattering the French people,' she tells the Count de La Motte. And as a spice of anticlericalism is already an assured success, she does not fail to write that 'that ass the abbé Pfaff says of the French that they love blood.'

In Paris, Jeanne found numerous assistants. Libels poured out one after another, insulting, infamous, filthy. The *Letter of Madame de La Motte to the French*, the *Conversation between M. de Calonne and Madame de La Motte*, the *Conference between Madame de Polignac and Madame de La Motte*, the *Address of the Countess de La Motte-Valois to the National Assembly*; the Père Duchesne series: *Great Visit of Père Duchesne to Madame Lamotte* and *Great Visit of Madame Lamotte to Père Duchesne while ill*, *Declaration of Love by Père Duchesne to Madame Lamotte-Valois*. The

book-hawkers read them aloud at the street-corners, becoming centres of gaping crowds.

There was a lower descent still. There appeared the *French Messalina, or the Nights of the Duchesse de Polignac*, the *Private, Libertine, and Scandalous Life of Marie Antoinette*, the *Nymphomania of Marie Antoinette, wife of Louis XVI.*, *Marie Antoinette in trouble*, the *Last Sighs of the Tearful Wench*, the *National B . . . under the Auspices of the Queen*, the *Royal B . . . followed by a Secret Interview between the Queen and the Cardinal de Rohan*, the *Presents of the Goddess Hebe to the Royal Messalina*, the *Grand Fête given by the Mongrels of Paris to all the p . . . on the day of the King and Queen's arrival, in joy at the return of their Father and Mother*, the *Rustic Scenes at Trianon*. These filthy pamphlets were in high vogue; and copies were sold in con-

siderable numbers. 'It is amazing,' says a writer, 'to see this impure heap of libels pursuing the people in the streets, and spreading our shame over all Europe.'

But the queen found defenders also: the *Reply to the Petition of Jeanne de Valois*, the *Resurrection of the Necklace by M. Lameth and Company*, the *Captain Tempest to Jeanne de Valois*. Addressing himself to the countess, the captain said: 'I admit that in a moment of effervescence, when all the heads of the mob are excited, when all imaginations are on fire, it is easy for adroit and powerful villains to capture the minds of the people by flattering their passions, to delude them as to their true interests by covering with flowers the gulf into which they wish to drag them. I know even that sometimes their crimes may be bought. Consult your constituents and you will learn something of this; or rather look at this moment into the depths of your own heart;

you will find there the great truth I affirm; you will see that you are to-day only the passive instrument of the hate and vengeance of a few ambitious men, who need the resources of your genius to fill up the measure of their conspiracies.'

XI

REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS

AROUND the La Mottes, in fact, an interesting party was disporting itself. The great revolutionists, Robespierre, Marat, Hébert, Sergent, Panis, Manuel, were quick to perceive the capital they might make of the Necklace affair. They hovered about the Count de La Motte, 'got him to reveal all the conduct of the queen, that audacious woman, who had drawn on herself the scorn and hatred of all good Frenchmen.' In London, the agents of the Duke of Orleans were trying, on their part, to win Jeanne de Valois to their side. The Court was warned of it, and endeavoured to ward off the danger. It was

a curious game. On the king's side it was led by Mirabeau, whom Louis XVI. had just won over by means of his privy purse, though it is fair to say that Mirabeau appears to have been sincerely indignant at the intrigue revealed to him. 'I know no infamy, in these times so fertile in villainy,' writes the Comte de La Marck, 'which would have disgusted Mirabeau like this odious machination. It made him boil with rage, and redoubled his energy. "I will snatch this hapless queen from her tormentors," he cried, "or perish." At this time Mirabeau threw over all the calculations that might have preserved his popularity; and boldly and frankly mounted into the breach to attack the enemies of the monarchy.'

His notes for the Court show how deeply the great orator was then preoccupied with the intrigues abrewing. 'In the days preceding and following July 14,' he wrote on

November 11, 1790, 'and in the days preceding and following October 5 and 6, the voice of Madame de La Motte was able by itself alone to bring about a horrible crime.' He goes on: 'Is the Duke of Orleans the sole author of this plot? Is he only the agent of La Fayette? Whatever the truth may be, the Duke of Orleans is not alone, though he may be in the forefront. La Fayette has probably not appeared, but the Sémonvilles and the Talons have appeared: it is their doing, the finger-mark of the worker is plain. Likewise the Lameths have not appeared; but they have let fall hints, perhaps egged on a d'Aiguillon, a Muguet de Nantes, a Danton; and they winked at things rather than actually brought them about, wishing, whatever happens, to be in a position to profit. All these people can be foiled if we only adopt a firm, rapid, and persistent course. This horrible plot is only really dangerous as

long as we are afraid to probe it.' In a note dated November 12, he continues: 'It is no longer merely to gratify the public malignity that the revision of Madame de La Motte's case is being agitated for; a direct attack on the queen is intended, not to appease a mere feeling of resentment, but to obtain other successes afterwards when the first obstacle is surmounted. It would not be a difficult nor an unlikely thing to systematise schemes as culpable. Perhaps, after having disorganised the realm and destroyed all the sources of authority, the heads of the popular party recognise that they have much more material for a republic than for a monarchy; perhaps they are struck by the impossibility of re-establishing order without giving way and retracing their steps: and, either because shame holds them back, or because a greater ambition presents itself to their hopes, they prefer to change the ancient form of government,

which it is almost out of their power now to consolidate. In this scheme the queen, whose character, firmness, and clearness of mind they know, would be the first object of their attack, both as the first and the strongest defence of the throne, and as the sentinel who is most assiduously watching over the security of the monarch. But the great art of such ambitious men would be to conceal their aim. They would wish to appear to be forced on by events, and not to direct them. After having made the La Motte case a destructive poison to the queen; after having changed the absurdest calumnies into legal proofs capable of deceiving the king; they would raise, one after another, questions of divorce, regency, the marriage of kings, the education of the heir to the throne. In the midst of all these discussions and all these contests it would be easy to surround the king with terrors, to make the burden of the crown

more and more unendurable, and finally to reduce his authority to such an empty form that he would himself abdicate, or agree to leave, for the rest of his reign, his power in other hands. The horrible designs I am only with great regret describing here, certainly do not exceed the bounds of human wickedness; in this respect alone the La Motte affair would be formidable, because it would form part of a veritable conspiracy.'[1]

This remarkable page was well worth quoting in its entirety. Mirabeau concludes: 'If the woman La Motte is not arrested within a couple of days, you will

[1] It is very curious to compare this note of Mirabeau with the following passage from the *Reply to the Petition of Jeanne de La Motte*, an anonymous pamphlet published at this time: 'The party making use of you will betray themselves by their madness. This is what they will do: they will demand from the National Assembly a divorce, and couple this demand with the insults dictated to you against the queen. They want to induce the people and the capital, which they hope to cajole with talk of justice and vengeance, to ask the king to separate for ever from the mother of his children, and to abandon her to their rage.'

have to change your procedure, confine yourselves to keeping an eye on her, finding out her plans, her connections, her resources, her hopes, without having her arrested, so as to avoid scandal. It would be possible, with some ingenuity, to deceive this woman, crafty as she may be, by offering her protection and defenders whom she would not think of mistrusting.'

Mirabeau's plan was adopted and put into execution by Louis XVI.'s expiring government with surprising ability and success. Montmorin, the only minister left who remained favourable to the king, had succeeded in circumventing the Count de La Motte to such an extent that the Count had accepted as his consulting barrister the head of the royal secret police, the advocate Jacques Claude Martin Marivaux, who was afterwards condemned to death by the revolutionary tribunal for performing the functions assigned to him at this time.

'M. de La Motte has returned to Paris,' we read in Duquesnoy's *Journal*, under 1790. 'He has come to renew his attacks on the queen. Happily he has addressed himself to very prudent folk, who are labouring to hinder his proceedings. There is reason to believe they will succeed.' La Motte swore by Marivaux.

Another revolutionary group—Lameth, Barnave, d'Aiguillon, Menou—circled round the Jew Bassenge, to whom the Cardinal de Rohan was debtor for the Necklace. They invited him to dinner, and commiserated an honest merchant on being the unfortunate victim of a cruel court intrigue. They hinted that the day of justice was at length about to dawn, and that the scale would not incline in favour of kings. They marked out his course, exhorting him to present a petition to the Jacobins to persuade the National Assembly to clear him

in the eyes of the nation. But how was the nation concerned in a purely private matter? In this way. The abbey of Saint-Vaast, once belonging to the Cardinal de Rohan, and now part of the national property, could no longer be subject to the temporary mortgage assigned by the royal order to Bassenge. His claim was sacred, and became one of the king's obligations, an obligation which, like the rest, ought to be placed under the guardianship of the nation. A memorial was drawn up by Tavernier. Menou persuaded his companions to introduce additional phrases against the queen. 'It was proposed,' writes the Count de La Marck to Mercy-Argenteau, 'to present this petition to the National Assembly, not to make the nation pay Bassenge—every one knows that is impossible—but to lead to a discussion in which it will be maintained that the Necklace ought to be paid for out of the civil list, which is only an-

other way of having the case retried.' The jewellers Böhmer and Bassenge considered the proposition; but this important way of going to work scared them; they would have preferred a more discreet method, and they sent to the royal court the following note, the terms of which should be noticed: 'People who are at the present time enjoying a certain credit are apparently interesting themselves in Böhmer and Bassenge. They flatter them that they are about to be rescued from the extraordinary situation in which they find themselves, and paid in full. But Böhmer and Bassenge fear that their patrons are only wanting to serve them at the expense of a name for which they have the greatest veneration, and they will only put themselves in the hands of those now courting them after having exhausted all other means.'

The court learnt through its agents that

Jeanne was working in London at a fresh pamphlet, more spiteful and scandalous than the first. 'You may tell your advocate,' she wrote to her husband, 'that my *Life* will before long be given to the public. If I read it to him, he would himself see what a thunderbolt this work will launch at the heads of the monsters, the authors of my disgrace.' Jeanne de Valois, however, would be only too glad to avoid this scandal if the court would find the right means of persuasion. 'Since the time when, by a sort of miracle,' she wrote herself, 'I set foot on this foreign land, where freedom smiles upon misfortune, I have done all I could to induce Her Majesty to believe that I was in possession of a correspondence the publication of which would have the double effect of compromising her and minimising my faults. In each of my letters I repeated that "since it had pleased Providence that I should survive that multitude of horrors;

since it had saved me from my own rages; its intention was clearly that I should not perish for lack of the means of subsistence; that, in the plight to which I am reduced, I might at least hope that the queen would have restored to me what the confiscation of my goods and effects had poured into the coffers of the king."'

Meanwhile, to her husband, who under Marivaux' influence was insisting that she should defer the printing of her new pamphlet, she wrote at once: 'You desire, my dear, that I shall not write my *Life*, or publish it, for fear of offending the government: learn to follow the advice of your defender, but try to understand also that I don't know why you are so much afraid. I am not speaking against anybody, and besides, this point, I am tired of telling you, doesn't concern you. I have much affection for you, but in this matter I shall follow my own inclination.'

Marivaux considered that the surest means of stopping the publication was to have Jeanne de Valois at Paris within reach. La Motte wrote asking her to come, insisting on it. The negotiations for the purchase by the court of the new pamphlet would be much easier there. Madame de La Motte hesitated. What about the Salpétrière? 'What strikes me very forcibly,' she answered, 'is that if it is true that some person of rank is bent on my silence, for the tranquillity of Toinette, why don't they come where I am and make the proper arrangements with me? Why is my presence in Paris so much desired? The Salpétrière has not been destroyed; consequently they might throw me again into their loathsome holes.'

Since she refused to go to France, Marivaux decided that some one should go to her, and keep watch upon her in London, as her husband was being watched in

Paris. He sought the aid of Dubu de Longchamp, general administrator of the post-office, whom she had once met at the house of one Mortsange, and who wrote to her on June 2, 1791, pretending to share and to approve her fears and mistrust :—

'You have been urged to come to Paris at this time. I am not at all in favour of your coming. You must wait till M. de La Motte's affairs are settled, till your husband's hopes are changed into certainties. He is opposed to a scandal which would be dangerous without being useful. Follow his example, madam. Give up all hope of vengeance for the firm resolve to rest your weary head on a peaceful and stable soil. The time of illusions must be past. The time of sorrow is sure to spend itself. Devoted as I am to the relief of the unfortunate, I shall regard it as delightful, madam, to be useful to M. de La Motte and yourself.'

XII

THE END OF JEANNE DE VALOIS

On June 10, 1791, an agent of Dubu de Longchamp named Bertrand left Calais, to assume the office of watchdog over Madame de La Motte, and to take care that the agents of the revolutionist factions, of Marat, Robespierre and Lameth, and of the Duke of Orleans, did not approach her. He arrived on the 13th. A horrible drama had just been enacted. As the result of proceedings taken against her by a creditor, an upholsterer named Mackenzie, Madame de La Motte was suddenly visited by a number of constables. In her half-frantic state, the vision of her past crimes and punishments rose suddenly before her mind :

the horrible punishment before the steps of the Palais de Justice, the shameful letters burnt into her smoking flesh, the cells of the Salpétrière; and, with a movement of terror, as though impelled by the force of Fate, she had opened the window, and flung herself down from the second story on to the pavement. Unconscious, with mangled limbs, she had been picked up by a perfumer named Warren, who lived opposite Lambeth Street, near Westminster Bridge.

'When I entered her room,' wrote Bertrand to Dubu on June 13, 1791, 'she began to work on my feelings. She lifted the bedclothes so that I might see her injuries. There was never seen anything so horrible. Her thigh is broken about the middle, one leg is broken at the knee, and both are in splints. Deposits of purulent matter are forming, and the surgeon was obliged to make incisions in

order to allow suppuration. Her whole body is dark yellow in colour, from head to foot.' She was in the deepest want, having absolutely nothing to live on. Eighteen months before she had received one hundred and seventy guineas in advance for her new *Memoirs*, on which she had supported life since. She was now wholly dependent on the charity of Mr. Warren, and that was beginning to wear out.

Her condition grew worse and worse. 'A whitish spot,' wrote Bertrand on June 21, 'has appeared on the thigh. After a poultice, a considerable swelling formed, which burst and flooded her thigh with pus of a disgusting odour, and the matter was so abundant that five saucerfuls of it were thrown away. When I went in, the smell was unendurable, though a lot of brown paper had been burnt and all the windows were open.'

Warren the perfumer was a decent man,

but a little hardhearted. He reckoned that the sick woman was costing him a good deal of money, and began to be afraid that it would never be reimbursed. 'When all is said and done,' he wrote to Dubu de Longchamp, 'I haven't the means to continue supporting her. To me, the duties of a husband and father come before those of friendship.' He asked Jeanne roughly on her bed of suffering what had become of her husband and the fine friends of whom she was always talking, but none of whom appeared. 'This Bertrand,' he said, 'who never leaves your bedside, is one of your old lovers.' He reproached her with the linen she was soiling, and refused to pay the nurse attending her.

In Paris, events were hurrying on. The general restlessness was extreme. Bertrand received no news from Dubu de Longchamp. 'The sick woman,' he wrote, 'would like to have some assistance, being

absolutely destitute. I do all that I can to persuade her that her affairs are in the best possible condition ; but she is as much astonished as I am at getting no news.'

Bertrand's mission was not merely to keep an eye on Madame de La Motte, but to prevent the appearance of her book, *The Life of Jeanne de Saint-Rémy de Valois, Countess de La Motte.* Six thousand copies had been printed, of which four thousand were for the booksellers of Paris, and a thousand for those of London and Holland ; while a thousand copies of an English translation had also been printed. Bertrand opened negotiations. The publication, though announced in the London journals, was delayed. Madame de La Motte, who was to have signed every copy, put it off from day to day under pressure from Bertrand, who announced that money was being sent to her. But the money did not come.

Meanwhile Warren was worrying the patient. There were unpleasant scenes, and she wept bitterly. 'It is easily seen,' observes Bertrand, 'that it is only the fear of losing what she owes him that keeps him at all civil.'

'I had yesterday with the patient,' wrote the correspondent of Dubu de Longchamp on July 29, 'a scene for which my courage was not prepared. I will tone down its deplorable colours for you. She told me that she was quite convinced I had only come to London to make her perish in the most outrageous manner; that it was to take from her her hard-earned bread that we had thought of delaying the publication of her work, which was her only means of subsistence; that she would have gladly pardoned me if I had plunged a knife into her heart; that all that was left to her, after revenging herself on you and me, was to end her unhappy existence as promptly

as possible. I believe that if her strength had permitted, she would have accomplished so cruel a design. "Judge yourself," she said to me, "how much faith I should repose in your lies. I will sign to-morrow the copies of my book, and don't be offended if I take all necessary measures to secure compensation for your perfidy, and for the lamentable plight in which the delay in the appearance of my work, due to you, has thrown me."

'I let her have her say out,' adds Bertrand. 'I let her cries and tears pass in silence. The fever came upon her at that moment, with a dreadful shivering. This is only a slight sketch of this overpowering scene.'

From that moment the poor woman's state grew rapidly worse. On August 5 Bertrand wrote, 'The patient is nearing the end.'

Jeanne de Saint-Rémy de Valois,

Countess de La Motte, died on Tuesday, August 23, 1791, at eleven o'clock in the evening, in frightful anguish. The night before, she had been seized with vomitings and convulsions, which never left her till the end. She was buried on August 26, in the churchyard of St Mary's, Lambeth.[1]

Warren wrote at once to the Count de La Motte announcing the sad event. A few friends accompanied the coffin. 'I had her buried in Lambeth church, and reserved the right for her friends, if they are disposed to take advantage of it, to erect a monument over the remains of the most affectionate wife, sister, and friend that ever lived.'

[1] On page 2009 of the parish register the name is given as 'Jean Saint-Rymer de Valois, Countesse de La Motte.' 'Madame de La Motte died on Tuesday after suffering a martyrdom. She is buried to-day.' (Note of August 26, 1791, signed W. Harris, to Dubu de Longchamp. *Archives nationales*, F. 7/4445.) The *Courrier de l'Europe*, published in London, announced her death on the same day, August 26, as also did the *London Chronicle*.

The Count de La Motte made no reply. Warren wrote a second time, detailing the expenses he had incurred. The count was less likely to reply than ever. Warren represented to him that he was not behaving like a gentleman. And still La Motte answered nothing.

The unfortunate Bertrand had left London before the death of the countess. To Dubu de Longchamp, who had intrusted him with the mission he had carried out in London, he wrote: 'I leave this evening, August 19. I have the honour to ask you to send me some money to the *poste restante* at Calais. You will prolong my wretched existence. God knows, if you don't send me the means of returning, I shall have to beg my bread on the highway. My soul is grievously disturbed, as my wife can do nothing for me. I am leaving, trusting to Providence.'

XIII

THE HALL OF VENUS

THE *Life of Jeanne de Saint-Rémy de Valois*, the publication of which had occupied and tormented the poor woman to the hour of death, and to which she had owed her last resources, was sent from London to the bookseller Gueffier, on the Quai des Augustins in Paris. After having read the story of her lamentable end, he was still more saddened to set eyes on this dreadful pamphlet. The theme of it was as follows: Marie Antoinette had conceived an affection for her cousin, Jeanne de Valois, from the day when she saw her faint under her windows. She had made her the confidante of her most secret thoughts. That

was how it was that Jeanne had become the intermediary between her and the Cardinal de Rohan, the Iris messenger of their amours. The meetings took place at night, between eleven and midnight, at Trianon, in the hall of Venus, which Madame de La Motte thus describes: 'An elegant apartment, round in form, surmounted by a dome, is situated in the gardens of Petit-Trianon, on an eminence which you reach by a gentle slope. The building is surrounded by a moat, which the cardinal and myself used to cross by means of a plank thrown over it for that purpose. In the middle of the room stood a pedestal of white marble, a superb statue representing Apollo or Venus. In the corners are other statues—these are Cupids and Graces. The doors are of glass. You descend from the hall to the gardens by four marble steps. At the windows are curtains of the finest damask, spotted with

embroidered flowers. There are tapestries, arm-chairs, sofas.'

To that spot, when the king happened to be hunting at Rambouillet, Jeanne used to lead the cardinal to the queen, who awaited him on a couch.

Criticism, studying the *Life of Jeanne de Saint-Rémy*, has remarked that no hall existed at Trianon called the hall of Venus, no apartment resembling even distantly the description given by Madame de La Motte. During the winter of 1784, when these meetings were said to have taken place, Marie Antoinette never went to Trianon. On the days mentioned, the king was not hunting at Rambouillet. We have a journal in Louis XVI.'s own hand, in which all his movements are precisely recorded. Is there any need to dwell on the point? The book ends with a series of letters in which the queen and the cardinal tell each other of their love. Will

any one venture to maintain that these letters are authentic?

The court succeeded in having the books seized. The Count de La Motte himself revealed where they were warehoused. 'Without compromising anything,' he wrote to the king on May 5, 1792, 'I could claim and get from the hands of the malevolent the weapon they wish to make use of to-day in furtherance of their projects.' Laporte, controller of the civil list, bought the complete edition for 14,000 livres from the king's own funds. On May 26, 1792, he had them thrown into the furnace at the Sèvres porcelain manufactory, tied up in thirty bundles. They were burning for five hours. Everything was consumed. The municipal officers at once informed the National Assembly, and the *Père Duchesne* began to fulminate against the intrigues of the court. Laporte was summoned to the bar of the Assembly. It

was declared that he had destroyed in the Sèvres furnace the correspondence of Marie Antoinette with enemies of the state, and packets of false notes she had had made in London. Soon afterwards, a copy of the book, found at Laporte's house, was taken to the offices of the Committee of Surveillance, which, composed of strong 'patriots,' at once got the work reprinted and put on sale at Garnéry's. In these days no respectable man could read its pages without a feeling of nausea; but at that time, men's passions seasoned it with the spice necessary to permit its digestion. In the Hall of Venus, adorned with Cupids and Graces, behind the flower-embroidered curtains, on a sofa of figured silk inwoven with fine gold, the skirts of a Queen of France trailed the floor with the scarlet folds of a cardinal's robe: what a treat for the men of that day!

'At that moment,' write the Goncourts,

'Madame de La Motte's libel made its reappearance in France. Montmorin, the only royalist minister left to Louis, defending the queen one day in the council; and complaining, timidly at first, to Duport du Tertre of the threats levelled at her, and of the plot to assassinate her openly avowed by a considerable party, and ending by asking his colleague if he would allow such a crime to be consummated, Duport coldly replied that he would not countenance an assassination, but that he would not look with the same disfavour on a trial, if that were suggested. "What!" cried Montmorin, "you, a minister of the king, would consent to such an infamy?" "But what if there is no other means?" returned the keeper of the seals.'

The opportunity sought by Duport was about to be provided by the Count de La Motte, who was urging the revision of his trial. The turn taken by events robbed

the king of his means of action, and the count escaped the influence of his advisers. 'The course for me to pursue,' he wrote to Montmorin, 'reduces itself to two very simple points:—(1) to place myself in a position to get a decision on my contumacy; (2) to plead for the quashing of the decree that branded my wife, and to sue the judges and the minister who used the secrecy of the Bastille to lead her to her ruin.'

He wrote to the keeper of the seals: 'A party once powerful, in order to ruin my wife, more weak than criminal, united the greatest instruments of despotism—the Bastille, and the judges in the pay of the court. The Bastille no longer exists, and the French people is about to choose judges who would blush to allow themselves to be led step by step into the labyrinth of Themis by an insolent and ferocious vizier.'

Besides, was not special consideration

due to the La Mottes? 'The sentence by which we were condemned,' said the count, 'was the signal for the astonishing revolution which was brought about with so much facility by the corruption of the court, the disorder of the finances, and the tyranny of those who shared the public power. There is a Providence which delights to direct the destiny of mortals, and which causes germs destructive to the power of tyranny to spring from the blood of the innocent!'

The Count de La Motte, however, prudently waited till 1792, when the Revolution was in full swing, to present himself at the Conciergerie as a prisoner, in order to purge himself of his contumacy. He was incarcerated on January 4. On the following night, between two and three o'clock, the prison caught fire. The *Père Duchesne* hastened to inform France that this was an incendiary feat instigated by

the court for the purpose of burning La Motte and his papers; and Robespierre, Hébert, and Manuel hastened up and rushed into the prison.

'Rest easy for the present,' said Manuel to the count, 'we are looking after you.'

Jeanne de Valois' husband published in his turn a memorial in his own defence, when his case came before the third tribunal. Meanwhile a revulsion seems to have taken place in his soul, in which feelings of this sort found little lodging as a rule—unless perhaps this too was a means in his eyes of extorting money. However that may be, he wrote to the king on May 5, 1792: 'A cabal, which is offended at my prudence, would like to make a dangerous scandal out of this affair. The Sieur Deplane, president and judge, was appointed to examine me. His questions had no other aim than to seek to compromise the queen, and principally

to find some means of bringing her before the court as a necessary witness to the facts; and the curious public fell into the trap.' The case was remitted to the first court, which, on July 20, 1792, quashed the sentence of June 1, 1786, by which the Count and Countess de La Motte had been condemned by the Parlement, 'seeing that,' said the new judgment, 'the indictment submitted by the procurator-general to the quondam Parlement of Paris, on September 7, 1785, is only signed at the end and not on each leaf, which is contrary to the law.' Thus the sentence was quashed for a technical irregularity. La Motte was again brought before a jury.

Other judges were lying hungrily in wait for the queen.

XIV

THE DEATH OF THE QUEEN

THE capture of the Bastille on the fourteenth of July had opened the door to popular passion. Taine's idea is profoundly true: it was the Jacobin conquest. As scholarship becomes better informed, and its impartiality increases, the great historian's conception will be confirmed by fresh proofs.

On October 6, yelling mobs streamed out of Paris towards Versailles and poured into the palace; women, their hair matted with dust and sweat, screamed for the 'entrails of the queen.' 'Madam, save the queen!' cried one of the guards, running to one of her waiting-women, his face stained with blood. Next day the

mob dragged the royal family to Paris, surrounding their slow-going carriages with ribald jests and obscene insults. On the driver's seat of the coach in which the queen sat with her boy, the actor Beaulieu amused the crowd and scared the occupants with his mountebank's antics. The queen sat dry-eyed, silent, immoveable, seemingly lost in a dream. 'I am hungry, mamma,' said the little dauphin, and then the tears came.

The 20th of June 1792 was a repetition of the October day. The royal family were at the Tuileries. At half-past four in the afternoon the cries of the mob enveloped the palace like rolling thunder. The National Guards had barely time to hurry the queen into the council-chamber before the human flood burst upon them. They dragged the long table in front of the queen and her children, whom only three feet of deal separated from faces crimson with rage

and wine, clenched fists, and brandished pikes. 'The queen stood erect,' write the brothers De Goncourt, 'with Madame on her right, pressing close against her. The dauphin, his eyes wide open in a childish stare, was on her left. Men, women, pikes, knives, yells, insults, all poured in one torrent towards the queen. One of these cannibals displayed a bundle of switches, with the legend "For Marie Antoinette"; another flourished a miniature gibbet with a doll swinging upon it; another thrust forward under the very eyes of the queen, who did not blench, a dish bearing a mass of bleeding flesh shaped like a heart. Some one else flung red caps upon the heads of the queen and her son. Women all dishevelled spat their filthy jests in her face, to be answered in her gentle voice: "Have you ever seen me? Have I ever done you any harm? You are mistaken: I am a Frenchwoman. I was so happy

when you loved me!" And at this sweet, sad voice, at this fair, sorrowful face, the storm was calmed, the fury sank abashed. Pity softened these hard hearts; humanity became itself again. The squalling viragoes held their peace, and even felt their tears flow. "They have had their fill," cried Santerre, shrugging. And he drew near, leant upon the table and jeered; but even his lips closed, involuntarily, before the quiet, searching gaze of the queen. To cover his confusion the man growled: "Take that child's cap off," pointing to the dauphin: "see how hot he is!" This was the poor child who, next day, when the guards were called to arms, asked: "Mamma, is it yesterday again?" "They will murder me," said the queen a little later: "what will become of my children?"'

Under the palace windows disgusting prints were being hawked about, and pamphlets written against her in mud from

the gutters. The terrace of the Feuillants had been thrown open to the people by the Assembly, and you may be sure they made good use of it! From morning to night the talk there was so horrible that the queen was twice obliged to withdraw. Sometimes—such was her spirit—she wished to descend to the garden and speak to the people: 'I will tell them that I love them, and that I am a Frenchwoman. Not love the French!—I, the mother of a dauphin!' But her illusions were soon dispelled: calumny had struck its roots too deep. What availed the voice of one lonely woman against the tempest?

On August 10 Louis XVI. and his family, terrified at the popular rising, took refuge in the bosom of the Assembly. 'I have come here,' said the king, 'to prevent a great crime.' He placed himself at the president's left, and Marie Antoinette had made the dauphin sit by her side. 'Some

one take him up to the president,' cried a voice: 'he belongs to the nation. The Austrian woman is unworthy of his confidence!' And an usher seized the child, weeping with terror and clinging to his mother's skirts. In the night the king and queen proceeded to the Feuillants. By the light of candles stuck on the muzzles of muskets, their feeble rays glinting on the blood-stained steel of pikes, the queen walked slowly between the close ranks of the crowd, whence rose the refrain—

'Madame Veto avait promis
De faire égorger tout Paris.'

The sentinels had much ado to hold the throng back. When one of the queen's women appeared at the door of the cells of the ancient convent, which had been hastily furnished, she was driven back by yells. Beneath the windows arose cries of 'Death to the queen!' 'Every time that I

glanced at this grating,' said a certain Dufour, 'I thought I was at the menagerie watching the rage of the wild beasts when some one comes before their bars!' Even when the queen had retired to rest, cries of 'Fling us her head!' reached her.

On August 12 the Legislative Assembly, under the influence of the Jacobins, decided to leave the Commune of Paris to settle on the place where the king was to live, and to arrange the details of his existence. Marie Antoinette was now in good hands, forsooth, which were going to take special care of her.

On August 13, 1792, the queen, with her husband, her children, Madame Elizabeth, and the Princess de Lamballe, was transferred to the smaller tower of the Temple. But on the 19th two commissioners from the municipality were ordered to proceed to the removal of all persons not belonging to the 'Capet family.' Manuel

waxed facetious on the embarrassing state inseparable from royalty. 'I will give you,' he said, 'some women of my acquaintance to serve you.' The queen replied that she needed no one, as she and her sister-in-law would assist each other.

'Very well, madam,' said the man; 'you have only to serve yourself: that will save you the trouble of choosing.'

Attendants were placed over Marie Antoinette to spy upon her from night till morning and from morning till night. 'Not a movement, not a word, not a glance,' say the Goncourts, 'but had its witnesses and informers! Not a moment had she alone or with her family. There were always these men playing the spy upon her eyes, her lips, her silence! Always these men, pursuing her even into her bed-chamber when she slipped away to change her dress! Even at night, in the anteroom where Madame de Lamballe had lately

slept, the municipal guards kept watch, and the queen was spied on in her very slumbers.'

Marseillais had been placed at all the landings. When the queen ascended from the garden, they sang gaily—

'Madame à sa tour monte,
Ne sait quand descendra.'

This walk in the garden, which she imposed on herself for the sake of her children's health, was a martyrdom. At the foot of the tower the two gaolers, Risbey and Rocher, blew the smoke of their pipes in her face, while the municipal guards, riding cock-horse on chairs set in a circle, laughed at the grimaces she made at the smell of the smoke. They watched the curling wreaths as they played about her abundant fair locks. In the garden the soldiers had orders to wear their hats ostentatiously before her. The gunners started to dance

in a ring, singing the 'Ça ira!' and the labourers working at the walls of the enclosure said openly that they would prefer to use their tools in breaking her head.

The Commune had given very explicit instructions. Persons entering the queen's presence were to keep their hats on. 'I saw in the queen's apartment,' writes Lepitre, 'a stonecutter named Mercereau, in the filthiest apparel, lying at full length on a damask sofa where the queen usually sat, and he justified himself by invoking the principle of equality. The municipal guards used systematically to loll in arm-chairs before the fireplace, resting their feet on the andirons so as to render it impossible for the princesses to warm themselves.'

Lampoons of the most disgusting kind, slanders, the pamphlets of Boussenard, the *Ménage royale en déroute*, the *Tentation d'Antoine et son cochon*, were cried at the foot of the walls. 'Worst of all these outrages

on the queen was the shameful outrage which no people nor age had yet ventured against the modesty of a woman : there was no lavatory for the princesses except that of the town guards and the soldiers.'

And yet, while she was with her children life seemed endurable. She used to be present at the supper of her son. When it happened that the guards had gone away for a moment she hastily, and in a whisper, made the boy repeat a prayer. Then she put him to bed, and sat watching him until nine o'clock. Then the king's supper was served, and after that she returned to the bedside of the child till a late hour of the night.

The queen had always been fond of embroidery, and it formed a distraction for these long hours. Some one no doubt noticed that it gave her too much pleasure, for an order from the municipality put an end to the needlework. Her embroidery, said the Commune, concealed a correspond-

ence in hieroglyphics. Deprived of her embroidery, Marie Antoinette devoted herself to darning, the need of which was very manifest. The dauphin slept in tattered sheets; and she mended the king's coat while he was in bed.

The queen, like her sister-in-law and her daughter, was dressed in the morning in white piqué, and their heads were covered with white lawn. At noon they put on their only finery: a garment of tulle, with little flowers on a brown ground.

On September 22 the Republic was proclaimed. A few days afterwards the prisoner received some linen that had been previously ordered for her. The dressmakers had worked her monogram upon it, surmounted by the royal crown; and the republican government gave themselves the pleasure of compelling the queen to unpick with her own hands the crowns embroidered upon her linen.

'The queen having been sick and taken no food,' says Turgy, 'sent to ask me to have a broth prepared for supper. Just as I handed it to her, she learned that the woman Tison—placed in her prison as wardress—was likewise indisposed. She ordered the broth to be taken to her. I then asked one of the guard to take me to the kitchen to procure another portion. Not one of them would accompany me.' The queen, ill as she was, went supperless to bed.

This woman Tison was a decoy, who insinuated herself into the queen's confidence only to betray her. Her accusations brought ruin upon those whose sympathies were moved by the prisoners' unhappy plight. But nature had its revenge. One day the woman fell at the queen's feet, imploring her pardon. She was frantic with remorse. She was carried away screaming to a madhouse. And Marie

THE PRINCESSE DE LAMBALLE.

Antoinette, who had learned of her tale-bearing and its terrible consequences, compassionately inquired after her welfare.

The family were at dinner on September 3, when they were interrupted by the noise to which they were becoming accustomed—the clamour of the mob. People cried out for the queen to come to the window. The unhappy woman was going there when one of the guard named Menessier suddenly threw himself in front of her, pushed her back, and drew the curtains. But Louis XVI., since his people asked for him, was ready to appear before them. The curtains were thrown back. The queen uttered no cry, she did not faint; but her eyes were fixed in a dreadful stare—the wild stare of a madwoman. At the end of a pike they were presenting to her the ghastly head of the Princess de Lamballe. The people wanted her to embrace her friend for the last time. 'Two individuals,' writes the

painter Daujon, who chanced to be then at the foot of the tower, 'were dragging by the legs a headless body, nude, its back to the ground, its stomach opened as high as the breast. At the foot of the tower the corpse was ostentatiously displayed, and the limbs were arranged with a sort of art, and a callousness that opens a wide field for the meditation of the philosopher.'

The gentle, beautiful Princess de Lamballe, who, as we have seen, had in her tender, thoughtless pity visited Madame de La Motte at the Salpétrière, had been massacred with hammers at the moment when her gaolers liberated her from the prison of La Force. Her beautiful body suffered infamous mutilations. The head was severed from the trunk and borne by the rabble to a wine-merchant's. It was placed there upon his counter, with little glasses ranged all round. The fair ringlets, matted with blood, fell into the poor glazed

staring eyes; the features were drawn; the flesh was wan and flaccid, the skin marked with green spots of decomposing blood,—and the light sparkled in the little glasses, forming a gay aureole with the scintillation of the golden liquor.

One man had taken the head, another from the shattered breast had ripped the heart. This he ate while it was still raw and throbbing. It was, he said, a dainty and delicious morsel. This relish for a fresh and palpitating heart was so much to the taste of the day that in the evening several gallant fellows, in different parts of the capital, each boasted of having been the hero of the adventure, and one of them, to illustrate his story, called admiring attention to his moustaches still red with blood.

Louis was transferred on September 30 from the small tower to the large tower of the Temple, and was there joined on

October 26 by his wife and sister, Madame Elizabeth.

On the night of January 20, 1793, Madame heard her mother, who had not undressed, shaking in her bed all night long from cold and grief. Louis had just been condemned to death. Throughout the whole course of the trial the Convention had refused to the king the consolation and support of seeing his wife and children; but it shrank from forbidding a last embrace before the execution. The closing interview was to take place in the dining-room. The queen entered holding her son by the hand. She wished to draw the king towards her own room. 'No,' said the king, 'I may only see you here.' The municipal guards stood pressing their faces against the glass door, filling their eyes with the sight of 'perhaps the greatest sorrow,' say the Goncourts, 'with which God has ever afflicted the gaze of men.'

All bent forward: the king was blessing his wife and sister and children. The dauphin was lifting up his tiny hand, and swearing, at his father's bidding, to pardon those who were putting that father to death.' Then silence. Nothing was possible now but sobs.

Before he died the king laid aside his wedding ring, a seal, and a packet of hair for his wife. The Convention feared that objects of this nature in the hands of an imprisoned woman might compromise the destiny of the Revolution, and the memorials of the dead husband were not handed to his wife. But Toulan, one of the guards, touched by her anguish, purloined the articles, and Marie Antoinette was able to press them to her heart. Toulan was guillotined.

On the day of the king's execution the queen asked for mourning of the simplest kind, the costume of the people—'a mantle

of black taffety, a black neckerchief and skirt, a pair of black gloves, and two caps of black taffety.' She asked at the same time for a pair of sheets and a quilted coverlet. But the Convention thought that sheets and a quilt were too luxurious for a lady in the month of January. They granted the mourning, but refused the coverlet.

'The widow wore mourning which she owed to the generosity of the republic. She had on her head a washerwoman's cap, with weepers falling upon her shoulders. A black veil was between the weepers and her hair. A large white fichu was crossed over her neck and fastened with a blunt pin. A little black shawl edged with white was knotted at the bodice of her black dress. On her brow and down her temples strayed wisps of hair that escaped from her cap, and the hair was blanching fast. Her mien was proud still, and her eyebrows

MARIE ANTOINETTE IN MOURNING GARB.

had not lowered their imperial arch. Tears had reddened her eyelids, tears had swollen her eyes. Her look had lost its radiance for a hard, fixed stare. The blue of her eyes no longer had its flashing brilliance, its caressing softness; it was glassy, cold, almost fierce. The beautiful, aquiline contour of her nose was become a bony ridge, and agony seemed to have pinched the nostrils once quivering with youth.'

This woman, who but lately had seen the world at her feet in one emulation of flattery and deference, who had known every form of splendour, now in her cold and narrow prison possessed but one comfort and stay —we cannot say a joy—her children. The revolutionary government thought that this was too much. The queen, Madame, and Madame Elizabeth were awakened by the sound of opening gratings: it was the guards coming to inform Marie Antoinette of the new decree of the Committee of

Public Safety, sanctioned by the Convention: 'The Committee decrees that the son Capet shall be separated from his mother.' At first the queen did not understand. Then suddenly she flung herself upon her son with the cry of a wild creature. 'Kill me first!' she cried. The men replied that if she did not loose the child it was not she they would kill, but the little one: and the boy was in their hands.

At last she was utterly broken: was she still alive? Robespierre thought that she was as yet only too much alive. 'The punishment of a tyrant,' he cried, on April 10, 1793, in the Convention, 'obtained after so much hateful discussion' (the great citizen thought that the forms of trial had been too closely observed)—'shall this be the only homage we have rendered to liberty and equality?' The death of Marie Antoinette was destined to be a not less appreciable homage to them. 'This death,'

said Robespierre in conclusion, 'shall revive in all hearts a holy antipathy for royalty, and give a new force to public spirit.'

On August 1 the Committee of Public Safety submitted to the Convention the following decree: 'Marie Antoinette is remitted to the extraordinary tribunal: she will be transferred immediately to the Conciergerie.'

At one o'clock next morning the queen was awakened. As she left the tower in all haste without stooping, she struck her head against the grating.

'Have you hurt yourself?'

'Oh no! nothing can hurt me now!'

Twenty gendarmes escorted the prisoner through the heavy, stifling night air. She arrived at the Conciergerie at two o'clock in the morning. The *Père Duchesne* was beside itself with joy. 'I bent my ear to the grating,' it wrote, 'to hear her groans. "And so I shall never see," she

said, "the ruin of Paris which I had been so long preparing; I shall never swim in her blood."'

At the Conciergerie the queen was in want of everything. She had no change of linen, and the wardress, Madame Richard, dared not supply her with any, in spite of the pity which had touched her heart. The gendarmes were now installed in her room from morning till night, and there they indulged freely in their coarse soldier's talk and smoked their huge pipes. At night the queen's eyes were red and swollen with the smoke, her head was heavy with pain. Sometimes one of the gendarmes would notice it and drop his pipe.

At the Temple she had been deprived of her embroidery: here even her needles and thread were taken from her. How was she to pass the long, doleful hours? Struck with a presentiment of her approaching end, she thought of employing her

fingers to leave a little memento to her children. And she began to pick coarse threads from a piece of tapestry over which wall-paper, now rotted by the damp, had been hung. These threads she plaited with her patient hands, and succeeded in making a sort of lace. She had no light. 'I used to prolong my duties as much as I could in the evening,' said Rosalie Lamorlière, her maidservant, 'so that my mistress might remain a little longer in solitude and obscurity.' The dampness of the room was frightful. Bault, the warder, had a piece of old tapestry nailed to the wall in order that the queen's bed might thus be protected to some extent from the oozings. The members of the Committee of Public Safety were indignant at this mark of sympathy, and Bault had to invent a falsehood, and say that his object was to prevent the queen from hearing scraps of conversation from the other room. On August 19 Michonis, admini-

strator of police, asked the municipal officers composing the guard at the Temple to send in four chemises and a pair of shoes of which the queen had urgent need. 'These four miserable garments,' write the Goncourts, 'soon reduced to three, were only delivered to the queen at intervals of ten days. She had only two dresses, which she put on alternately. Her poor black dress, her poor white dress, both rotted by the moisture of her room ——We must pause here : words fail us.'

The queen had become extremely thin. She was altered beyond recognition. The common folk who saw her were struck with respect and pity. The warders placed in charge of her, the servants called to wait upon her, were touched to the bottom of their hearts by the sight of grief so nobly borne. Market-women brought her fruits : one a melon 'for her dear queen,' another a basket of peaches—heroines all, knowing that for melon and peaches they were

risking death. With the complicity of the warders the fruits arrived at their destination. Attempts were made to effect the queen's escape, at first from the Temple, afterwards from the Conciergerie. The first, directed by Toulan, almost succeeded; but at the last moment it became evident that the children would not be able to follow their mother. 'We have cherished a fine dream,' wrote the queen to Jarjayes, 'that is all. The interests of my son are all that I look to; and, whatever happiness I myself might have experienced in being out of this, I cannot consent to be separated from him. Be sure that I am conscious of the goodness of your reasons so far as my own interests are concerned, and know that this opportunity will never offer itself again, but I should never have a moment's joy if I left my children, and the thought leaves not a shadow of regret.' At the Conciergerie the plan of escape seemed easy of

execution, but the two gendarmes who formed the guard would have had to be killed. The queen was enduring a martyrdom, but the death of two men seemed to her too high a price to pay for liberty.

By this time the queen's fate had been decided. In vain was Madame de Staël, in London, publishing her eloquent appeals to justice and pity. 'To excite the multitude,' she wrote, 'it was incessantly repeated that the queen was an enemy of the French, and to this accusation the most ferocious forms were given. Say, you that accuse her, what blood, what tears she has ever caused to flow? In those ancient prisons that you have opened, have you found one single victim who charged Marie Antoinette with his fate? No queen, during the time of her greatest power, has ever known such open calumny, and the more certain men were that she would not punish, the more they multiplied their insults. We know

that she has been the butt of innumerable shafts of ingratitude, of thousands of lampoons, of revolting lawsuits, and we look in vain for the least sign of a vengeful action. It is true, then, that she has done no ill to a single soul, she who is suffering torments unheard-of.'

Of what avail were words so true and simple? The *Père Duchesne* had greater authority than Madame de Staël.

It was Carrier, the hero of Nantes, who at the height of the struggles between the Montagne and the Gironde had created the tribunal to which Marie Antoinette had been remitted. The work was worthy of its author. The juries, nominated by the Convention, were salaried officials who were bound to express their opinion severally in open court. They knew that if their verdict were not approved they would be guillotined. That was what the men of the Revolution called the independence of

the magistrature. 'It was only with the proviso that the jurors should give their verdict openly that the Friends of Liberty agreed to the presence of jurors in this tribunal,' writes Lamarque. Danton clearly indicated the purpose of the tribunal in a speech to the Assembly: 'This tribunal is to serve as a supreme court for the vengeance of the people.' When through a long course of months heads fell by thousands, Danton regarded the tribunal as serving its intention perfectly. But one day the same court decided that Danton himself should be guillotined, and he forthwith declared: 'It was I that established this tribunal; but not that it should be the scourge of humanity.' Anecdotes of this sort are numerous, and would give to the Revolution a charming air of drollery if among them one did not wade in pools of blood.

The law relating to suspects was voted

on September 16, 1793. The number of judges was then increased to sixteen, that of the jurymen to sixty. The list of candidates presented by Vouland was adopted by the Convention without discussion. 'Almost all,' said Gauthier to the Jacobins, 'have been chosen among the Jacobins, and of them we are sure.' An admirable court for the trial of the queen! The former president, Montané, had been thrown into prison because he had sought, it was said, to get Charlotte Corday acknowledged as mad.

The hero of the tribunal was the public prosecutor Fouquier-Tinville. When the royal power was at its height, he was distinguished by an ardent zeal for the glory of the king, composing in his honour a number of ballads and occasional verses. He had a pretty wit. Madame de Saint-Servan happened to be paralysed in consequence of a fall, and could not speak. 'It is not her tongue that we want,' cried

the prosecutor by a happy inspiration; 'it is her head that we want.' She was guillotined. 'Robespierre,' says Mercier, 'wanted to meet a man at once fiendish and docile, one of those men who are proud to become the lackeys of tyranny, and to whom crimes cost nothing; he met Fouquier-Tinville.'

He was worthily seconded by the delegates of the Commune, Pache, mayor of Paris; Chaumette, a procurator; Hébert, the procurator's deputy: names to which, sad to relate, the name of the illustrious Louis David has to be added. The crime committed by these men and their agents is too horrible for words. To corrupt a child to the destruction of his health, and then to use his corruption as a means of abominable outrage upon his mother; not satisfied with causing her to be insulted by her son, a child of eight, brutalised by beatings and brandy, but to repeat the atrocious calumny

in open court and make use of it, after her head had fallen, in the attempt to blacken the victim's reputation: such things, that seem humanly impossible, were actually committed. The official reports of the horrible cross-examination at the Temple are preserved in the National Archives. 'The young prince,' writes Daujon, who acted as clerk, 'was seated in a large chair, swinging his little legs, which did not touch the floor.' Did he understand the words put into his mouth? 'Chaumette,' said the dauphin's sister, a girl of fifteen, 'questioned me on dreadful things of which my mother and aunt were accused. I was overcome by such horror, and so indignant, that, in spite of all the fear I felt, I could not help saying it was infamous. In spite of my tears, they persisted in their questions. There were things I did not understand, but what I did understand was so horrible that I wept with indignation.'

The trial was fixed for the 15th of October. Two official counsel for the defence had been appointed by Hermann, the president, but only on the evening before; and one of them, Chauveau-Lagarde, was in the country. There was an enormous mass of material to digest, and by the advice of her counsel the queen requested a delay of three days for that purpose. Her letter was flung into the waste-paper basket. The trial commenced in fact on October 15, at eight o'clock in the morning, and continued without interruption until four o'clock next morning. Except for one brief interval it lasted thus for nearly twenty hours. And the queen had arrived exhausted, physically by months of privation, mentally by her woes: who would not have been overwhelmed by such tortures? To-day we see writers, comfortably settled in their armchairs, their feet on the fender, well-salaried professors,

in all the dignity of office, holding forth on the attitude of Marie Antoinette before her judges; to their way of thinking, she showed too little pride, too unsovereign-like a demeanour. 'One had to be present and watch every detail of this famous trial,' said Chauveau-Lagarde, 'to have a just idea of the splendid character the queen there displayed.'

She came in her mourning dress. She had done her best with the few rags left to her, and had piled up her hair—her poor blanched hair—with studied care: not through pride, but disdaining to move the populace by the sight of her misery.

Hermann and Fouquier-Tinville accused Marie Antoinette of desiring to remount to the throne upon the corpses of the patriots. She replied: 'I have never desired aught but the welfare of France; nothing but that she be happy; and if she is so, I shall be content.' An ordeal lasting

twenty hours! Sick, without food or rest, the queen had to put a constraint upon herself, master herself, never for an instant lose her self-control—to steel her failing nerves, to command her countenance and vanquish nature. As the spectators were continually asking her to rise from her seat so that they might see her better: 'Will the people soon be tired of my fatigue?' she murmured, in exhaustion.

The witnesses were heard. Hébert brought forward the filthy stories he had concocted in collaboration with Pache, Chaumette, and David. Short, slight, and well-trimmed, with fair hair and a mild countenance, he was editor of the *Père Duchesne*, and at this moment the most influential member of the Commune. He had married a nun of the Assomption-Saint-Honoré, a charming woman. Her drawing-room was a brilliant centre of wit. While insulting the aristocrats, Hébert

envied their refinement and distinction, and tried to copy them.

The queen let this flood of filth pass in silence. Hébert reeled off his tale in his suavest tones, with delicate inflections and carefully chosen language. The queen stood erect, her eyes fixed, her head stiff, not a muscle of her face contracting.

It was a memorable moment. Born in calumny, nourished on calumny, glorified even to this day by calumny, the Revolution could not but give to calumny dimensions which had never thitherto been attained, which have never been attained since, and which seemed unimaginable.

'I was going,' says Moëlle, a member of the Commune, 'to try to prove the falseness of Hébert's accusation, by mentioning a circumstance of the rules of the Temple and the means of surveillance practised there, when Fouquier-Tinville, who divined

my intention, sharply interrupted me with the request to say plain "yes" or "no."'

Fouquier delivered his address for the prosecution. 'Not content, in concert with the brothers of Louis Capet and the infamous and execrable Calonne, then finance minister, with having squandered in a frightful manner the finances of France, the fruit of the people's sweat, in order to satisfy her ill-regulated pleasures and pay the agents of her criminal intrigues' . . . 'at the same time that she was encouraging the Swiss to make their cartridges, in order to excite them still further she took some cartridges and bit them' . . . 'finally, immoral in every conceivable way, a second Agrippina, she is so wicked and so familiar with every crime that, forgetting her vocation as mother and the limits prescribed by the laws of nature, the widow Capet has not shrunk from indulging with Louis Capet, her son, by the confession of the latter him-

self, in abominations the mere idea and name of which make us shudder with horror.' Such were some of his sentences.

The queen still ignoring the foul charges, one of the jury, exasperated by such dignity, directly questioned her: 'If I have not replied,' she said, 'it is because nature refuses to answer such an accusation made against a mother; I appeal to all the mothers here present!'

Her voice rang out, and for the first time in the sight of the audience tears flowed down her cheeks. 'Before this sublime cry,' say the brothers Humbert, who were among the audience, 'a magnetic current ran through the hall. The *tricoteuses* (knitters) were touched in spite of themselves, and were all but applauding.' Piercing cries were heard; women fainted and had to be carried out. The harsh, nasal voice of Hermann threatened to have the hall cleared.

At midnight the president said to the advocates: 'In a quarter of an hour the proceedings will terminate: prepare your defence.' What could the defence be in these conditions? The two advocates surpassed themselves. They spoke with emotion and courage. Scarcely had they finished when by order of the members of the Committee of Public Safety present they were both arrested. De Sèze, one of the king's defenders, had been at La Force since October 20; the other, Malesherbes, was guillotined. Fouquier demanded the head of Chauveau-Lagarde. The pleadings were not allowed to be published, and a garbled account of them appeared in *Le Moniteur*.

As she left the court the queen gave to Tronçon-Ducoudray, the second of her advocates, a lock of hair and some earrings, begging him to give them to M. de Jarjayes as a memento. The Committee confiscated

these articles and put M. de Jarjayes under arrest.

Marie Antoinette was unanimously condemned to death. The jurors gave their verdict publicly, and each knew that if he was so misguided as to declare for her innocence he would himself be guillotined.

The queen heard the sentence unmoved. She came down from her bench with dauntless brow, and lifted the rail herself. She returned to the Conciergerie at half-past four in the morning. For the first time in sixty days she obtained a torch, and some ink and paper. What must her feelings have been! 'During this halt at the foot of the scaffold,' as she said, she wrote to her sister-in-law, Madame Elizabeth, the beautiful letter, so calm and elevated in style, which after more than a century draws tears of admiration and respect. She gave it to Bault the warder. Poor woman! she thought that these few

words of a dying sister to a sister herself destined to death would reach her. Fouquier-Tinville seized the letter, and it was discovered in the false bottom of a drawer under a mattress of Robespierre's, along with costly books and pictures which this amateur of enlightened tastes had appropriated from those he had done to death.

The sun was shining at eight o'clock when Marie Antoinette prepared to dress for her journey to the scaffold. She went into the narrow passage between her bed of sacking and the wall, herself laid out her chemise, bent down, and loosened her dress, to change her linen for the last time. Suddenly she paused. The gendarme in attendance had approached and, with his elbows on the pillow and his head in his hands, was watching her with the greatest interest. 'Her Majesty,' says Rosalie Lamorlière, her servant, 'replaced her wrap upon her shoulders, and with great gentle-

ness said to the young man: "In the name of decency, sir, allow me to change my linen without witnesses." "I cannot consent to it," answered the gendarme brusquely; "my orders are to keep my eye on all your movements."'

What a scene! A gendarme lying flat on the bed, following with curious and prurient gaze the dressing of a queen for her execution!

'The distress the brutality of this gendarme caused me,' says Rosalie Lamorlière, 'prevented my noticing whether the queen still had the medallion of M. the Dauphin, but I could very well see that she carefully rolled up her poor soiled chemise. She fastened it in one of her sleeves as in a sheath, and then pressed it into a space she caught sight of between the old wall-hanging and the wall.'

In vain she asked that her hands might not be bound on the tumbril: they were

tied together with such force that the curé Girard, to ease her, had to press his hand on her left arm during the ride. The tumbril advanced slowly. Marie Antoinette wore a white skirt falling over a black petticoat, a sort of white night-vest, a ribbon tied round the wrist, a cap of white linen, like that of the women of the people, with a black ribbon. She had vainly besought that she might go to execution bareheaded. Her white hair was cut close under her cap. She was pale, but had two hectic spots upon her cheeks. Her eyes were bloodshot, her eyelashes stiff and motionless. In the Rue Saint-Honoré the cart stopped for a moment, and a child, lifted up in his mother's arms, blew her a kiss, and then clapped his little hands gleefully. The queen responded with a smile, and wept. These were the only tears she shed during her passage to the scaffold.

Portrait de Marie Antoinette Reine de France conduite au Supplice. Dessiné à la plume par David. Spectateur du Convoi, se placé à une fenêtre avec la citoyenne Tullieu épouse du Représentant Tullieu de qui je tiens cette pièce.

Copie sur l'original existant dans la Collection Soulavie

THE QUEEN GOING TO EXECUTION.

'She mounted it with bravado,' said the journals next day, with an 'insolent' air of tranquillity. She set her dress in order for the execution herself.

Citizen Lapierre, a good patriot, saw the execution, and describes it in bad spelling and picturesque terms: 'Marie Antoinette, the hussy, made as fine an end as the hog of Godille our pork-butcher. She showed wonderful firmness on the scaffold and all along the Rue Saint-Honoré; in fact, she went right across Paris staring at the people with scorn and disdain; but wherever she passed the true sansculottes never ceased to cry: "Long live the Republic and down with tyranny!" The hussy had the strength of mind to go to the scaffold without blenching; but when she saw the medicine actually before her eyes she fell down, done for. But all the same, they gave her valets-de-chambre and perruquiers to make her toilette, and though she had

no beard they nevertheless gave her a trimming, and though women don't have them, that doesn't prevent us from shaving them well.'

Hébert, in the *Père Duchesne*, celebrated in lyric style the event of which he was so proud to have been the principal author: 'The greatest of all the joys of the *Père Duchesne* was to see with its own eyes the head of the *Veto* female separated from its goose neck.'

And the same day, in execution of the decree passed by the Convention, on the motion of Barère, the mortal remains of the eldest son of Marie Antoinette, the first dauphin, were removed from their tomb at Saint-Denis and shockingly profaned.

Nothing had been neglected, as we have seen. The fête of October was complete: 'in every way successful,' as our chroniclers would say.

Robespierre proclaimed that the death of Marie Antoinette would be a token of homage to liberty and equality; and those two great principles thus received, on October 16, 1793, a striking tribute.

XV

THE CARDINAL DE ROHAN IN HIS DIOCESE

Exiled to his abbey of the Chaise-Dieu after his acquittal by the Parlement, Prince Louis de Rohan had there won the affection of the monks and edified the people round. The work of an incendiary having threatened the town with a general conflagration in July 1786, the cardinal was one of the first to assist in extinguishing the flames, along with his brother, the Admiral de Guéménée, who was then living with him. When the flames had been conquered, the monks of the abbey carried the head of St. Robert in procession to the scene of the disaster, and the cardinal did not hesitate to kneel before the relic,

in the mud and water. The worthy inhabitants, says a contemporary writer, were moved to enthusiasm and admiration.

In September 1786, Louis de Rohan got permission to leave the Abbey of the Chaise-Dieu for that of Marmoutiers near Tours. On August 8, 1787, he went to live in the Abbey of St. Benoit-sur-Loire. He had kept up a correspondence with Maître Target, who had so devotedly defended him, and on December 15 he wrote to him the following letter, apropos of a bereavement the famous advocate had recently suffered—a letter in which his kindliness and generosity are well revealed:

'It seems to me, sir, that sorrows make still more sensitive the souls that injustice has not succeeded in hardening. I confess that mine has retained that delicious source of happiness. And if I had lost this sensibility, I should recover it all when your heart expresses its anguish. All your

causes of sorrow are intensified by the sight of the difficulties of the children of the lady you mourn. I can assist for a time in the education of the boy, whose sight you tell me is very weak, who is preparing for the Church, and whom you probably intend to continue his studies. I will send him, for each of the years '88, '89, and '90, three hundred livres a year, and then we shall see. It is very pleasant to me to think that I can do something that will be agreeable to you. I only wish I could do more for the child who is so dear to you.

'You know my feelings of friendship and attachment for you. I will end now therefore with the words *vale ! vale !*

'*P.S.* You ask after my health. It is improving, but slowly. May yours withstand all the sorrows of your heart.'

On December 24, 1788, the royal order by which Rohan had been exiled was re-

voked. He was at liberty to return to Saverne, and stopped at Mützig in Alsace, a place adjacent to his residence, where the people had organised fêtes in his honour. At three o'clock in the afternoon, the town-clerk, at the head of a detachment of dragoons in uniform, superbly equipped, and composed of the *élite* of the citizens, led his troops, sabre in hand, along the Dorlisheim Road, lining both sides of the way. At four o'clock the cardinal appeared. The clerk delivered an address; children with curled hair presented Rohan with nosegays. The crowd had assembled from all parts of the district. Near the great bridge, the Jews, two hundred in number, clothed all in black, were ranged in line, their rabbi at their head. The rabbi made a speech, to which the cardinal replied that he was delighted to see them again; whereupon the Jews indulged in demonstrations of 'the most lively and unfeigned joy.' At

the gates of the town all the clergy were assembled, with crosses and banners—parish priests and higher ecclesiastics. The town was hung with bunting. Reaching the château 'amid the sound of cymbals and trumpets, and the combined roar of cannon and musketry,' Rohan was harangued by the chief magistrate of Schirmeck. In the evening there was a general illumination. A number of the citizens drank too freely of Rhenish wine. The cardinal would not end this magnificent day without entering the synagogue, which was blazing with lights. He stayed there for half an hour, while they sang with appropriate gestures a Hebrew canticle, of which he understood nothing; but he told the rabbi he thought it charming, and thanked the Israelites once more for their kindness, their speeches, and all the candles they had lit for him. To wind up the fête, the more important burghers and inhabitants of the town, and

the dragoon corps in uniform, supped copiously in the town hall. In the square there was dancing by torchlight all night long. The Jews assembled in the house of one Daniel Levy, and drank wine and beer till dawn. 'In a word, everybody, rich, poor, young, old, gave rein to their feelings of respect and affection and joy. Each and all welcomed the happy return, so long desired, of their august prince-bishop.'

Sent as deputy to the States-General by the clergy of Haguenau, Rohan fulfilled a modest part there, notwithstanding the efforts made to play him off as a victim of despotism. The revolutionary movement was growing apace. Reinstated in his title of Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, Louis de Rohan retired to Ettenheim-Münster, in the part of his estates situated on the right bank of the Rhine. Though his fortune was considerably reduced, he continued to

support, to the utmost of his power, the priests and poor nobles who had been driven from their homes.

The civil constitution of the clergy was decreed on July 12, 1790, and their canonical institution taken from the Pope. The religious orders had been suppressed in February.

Rohan on this occasion addressed to his clergy and the faithful in his diocese a pastoral charge in which he spoke in warm terms against the 'novelties which the Apostle condemns and which are carrying desolation into the sanctuary.' He set himself to explain—but on this point his argument is historically very feeble—that in the early days of the Church the pastors were not elected by the people. For the Revolution was claiming to do nothing else than restore the Church to its primitive purity. The cardinal was more successful when he showed the absurdity of leaving the election

of bishops in the hands of those who did not profess the Catholic faith. Moreover, he undertook the defence of the Gallic church, 'that ancient edifice, founded on the first successors of the Apostles, watered by the blood of the martyrs, rendered illustrious by the lights of the greatest doctors,' and which, he said, was crumbling to pieces under their eyes. And further, in a bold and thoroughly literary metaphor—a reflection from the Academy of which he was a member—he added: 'The purple in which we are clothed warns us that we ought always to be ready, not merely to speak, but to shed our blood for the cause of God and His Church.'

These episcopal proceedings were the cause of the issue of a decree by the National High Court, on July 13, 1791, for the arrest of the cardinal as 'the author of letters, episcopal charges, canonical exhortations, pastoral instructions, containing

formal protests against the constitutional laws of the state, and tending to excite the people to insurrection.' He was further accused of having 'charged the Sieur Zipp, priest of Schierich, to distribute the libels and writings' incriminated.

Meanwhile Euloge Schneider, a Franciscan, a native of Würtzburg, professor of philosophy at the University of Bonn, appointed by the constitutional bishop of Strasburg professor of rhetoric at the Grand Seminary, and afterwards his vicar-general, was all-powerful in Alsace, and was there bringing to the guillotine wholesale all who attempted to teach Frenchmen the love of country and liberty.

Rohan died at Ettenheim on February 17, 1803, after appointing as his universal legatee Charlotte Dorothea de Rohan-Rochefort, daughter of Prince Armand de Rohan-Rochefort, his cousin-german. She had been betrothed to the handsome Duke

of Enghien, slain by Napoleon's orders in the moats of Vincennes, and under the instructions of General Hulin, who had been in the front rank of the conquerors of the Bastille.

XVI

LAMOTTE-COLLIER

We have seen that on July 20, 1792, the court of the first arrondissement had quashed, for a technical flaw, the sentence passed on the Count de La Motte, husband of Jeanne de Valois, by the Parlement. The prisoner was transferred to the Conciergerie, there to await the definitive judgment which would proclaim, he was assured, his complete rehabilitation. He was still in prison during September; then, being liberated, and escaping the massacre, he returned to Bar-sur-Aube.

On December 6, 1793, he was incarcerated on an information accusing him of being in correspondence with Pitt and

Coburg, and confined with suspects in the Grand Seminary of Troyes, where he remained until July 22, 1794. But he was no sooner liberated than he was again put under lock and key, and detained until October 16. Liberated once more, he married for the second time at Bar-sur-Aube, his wife being a young girl named Marie Clotilde Boudon, who had some means of her own. She in course of time presented him with a son. This son departed about 1817 for Guadeloupe with the battalion despatched to that colony; but his father never heard of him again: the young man died there of yellow fever.

Count Beugnot having been appointed director-general of the police, La Motte applied to him for assistance. Beugnot gave him that and more; he gave him the control of the theatre of the Porte-Saint-Martin, at a salary of 3000 francs. As we know, Beugnot had peculiar reasons

for showing benevolence towards the husband of Jeanne de Valois, whom he had so often taken to dinner at the *Cadran bleu*. La Motte afterwards fulfilled the same functions at the same remuneration in the gaming-houses. But he could never retain a situation; he was an incorrigible Bohemian. 'In 1816,' wrote the commissary Marlot, who, like himself, came from Bar-sur-Aube, 'M. Delamotte was recommended to us, and the persons who sent him to us inspired us with so much respect that their recommendation could be regarded only as a sovereign command. We solicited for him a place as inspector of police, and had him under our orders for about three years, under the name of Delmotte.' The Count de La Motte a police agent under the Restoration!—the irony of it is almost overwhelming.

During this period of his life, La Motte thus had means of supporting himself in

a regular manner. He frequented the houses of people of good standing, and was received in several drawing-rooms described by Victor Hugo as 'very good and very notable.' As is well known, Hugo incorporated in *Les Misérables* fragments of personal recollections, and he speaks of the Count de La Motte in a vivid and striking manner.[1] He shows him to us in the Legitimist drawing-room in the Rue Férou, which he describes in precise terms, except that he mentions the *habitués* only by initials—all but La Motte, whom he names in full.

'Madame de T.,' writes Victor Hugo, 'lived far from the court—"a very mixed society," as she used to say—in an honourable, proud, penurious isolation. A few friends met twice a week around her widowed hearth, constituting a purely Royalist salon. They took tea together,

[1] *Les Misérables*, Part III. *Marius*: Book III. chap. i.

and gave vent, according as the tide was set towards elegy or dithyrambs, to groanings or cries of horror on the age, the charter, the Bonapartists, the prostitution of the "blue ribbon" to the middle classes, the Jacobinism of Louis XVIII.; and they talked under their breath of the hopes awakened by Monsieur, afterwards Charles X.

'They used to receive with shrieks of mirth vulgar songs in which Napoleon was called *Nicolas*. Duchesses, the most refined and charming women of good society, went into raptures over rhymes like this, addressed to the "federals"—

> "Renfoncez dans vos culottes
> Le bout d'chemis' qui vous pend;
> Qu'on n'dis pas qu' les patriotes
> Ont arboré l'drapeau blanc!"'

Such was the society frequented in the early years of the Restoration by the husband of the late Jeanne de Valois, who

no doubt did not obtrude the functions in which he was then employed by the police. He was indeed one of the shining lights of the company.

'Like some church spires,' writes Victor Hugo, 'the salon of the Baronne de T. had two cocks.[1] One was Dr. Gillenormand, the other the Count de Lamotte-Valois, about whom they used to whisper to each other with a sort of consideration, "You know? He's the Lamotte of the Necklace business."'

La Motte appeared to the baronne's guests an old man 'with nothing remarkable about him but his silent and sententious air, his sharp and expressionless features, his perfectly polished manners, his coat buttoned up to his cravat, and his long legs, always crossed, in loose pantaloons, the colour of burnt sienna. His face was

[1 *Coq* is used in French as equivalent to our 'cock of the walk.']

the same colour as his pantaloons!' La Motte was a valued member of the society that met in the Rue Férou. He owed his position to his 'celebrity,' and strangely enough, as Hugo justly observes, to the name of Valois which he tacked on to his own.

The count appears, however, to have rendered some service as a police officer, especially in the conspiracy against the Duke Decaze in which Generals Donnadieu and Canuel were implicated. He was skilful in unearthing the authors of books and pamphlets which were to be proceeded against. Now it happened that Louis XVIII. had the whim to set on foot inquiries about the famous Count de La Motte. The investigations intrusted to the police were not long, as may be imagined, in bearing fruit, and the king was not a little surprised to learn that the husband and accomplice of the terrible Jeanne de Valois was one of the agents attached to his own intelli-

gence service. Louis suggested that he should compile his memoirs, desiring to read them as written by his own hand. 'We were instructed,' writes the commissary Marlot, 'to inform M. Delamotte, and we succeeded in inducing him to do what the sovereign desired. But at the end of some months this original character came and told us that he should finish nothing unless he were assured of a pension on the civil list. This demand offended the king, and M. Delamotte was given up: since then, he has vegetated in the capital.'

Meanwhile he had lost his second wife, whom he appears to have sincerely loved. From that time he sank deeper and deeper into want and wretchedness.

In 1824 we hear of him again. He was lodging at No. 8 Rue de la Clef, and was in continuous relation with a retired metal-turner named Pannisset, an advocate named Maître Caille, and a commission agent

named Vinet-Barmont. 'Profiting by the neglect in which the government left him,' notes a report to the Minister of the Interior, 'the said Lamotte-Collier recently devised a swindling scheme which is by no means new to him, and very closely resembles the first swindles he so fruitfully exploited forty years ago against the unfortunate queen. Lamotte has been for some time occupied, along with confederates, in the fabrication of an alleged correspondence of the royal family, especially of the late king Louis XVIII. with Marat and Robespierre.' A very wealthy Englishman had offered a large sum for these documents. La Motte tried to entice him by reading a few extracts; but the Englishman wanted the originals. 'Impossible,' said La Motte; 'they are at Brussels.' The would-be purchaser, rightly distrusting the count, broke off the negotiations.

Then the count threatened a second time to publish his memoirs, giving the true story of the Necklace, he said, adding in a tone of deep sadness that the late queen and a number of personages of the old court would be inevitably compromised in them, in spite of his desire to avoid such a misfortune. The anxiety of the restored monarchy to steer clear of fresh scandals may be imagined. Delavau, the prefect of police, got his friend Pannisset to speak to La Motte. He was offered an assured income, provided he drew up a true account of the events in which he had been concerned, and placed it in the hands of the government. The bargain was struck, and the prefect provided La Motte with a lodging in Rue Copeau. He there received a monthly pension of one hundred and fifty francs, and in addition, the clothes and other articles he needed. Pannisset made the purchases, and his outlay was refunded by the

prefect of police. This lasted through the years 1824 and 1825. La Motte compiled his memoirs, and handed them to Pannisset when completed, getting a receipt stating that he remained the owner. Pannisset transmitted them to his friend the prefect.

They were a tissue of gross and absurd lies. The prefect and the Minister of the Interior saw that they had been fooled, and sent the author about his business. He went to lodge with an English doctor named Harkell in Rue de la Michodière, afterwards going to live in the village of Orsel.

Early in 1827 a lawsuit, which made some stir because 'Lamotte-Collier,' as he had been called for some years, was concerned in it, recalled him to public notice. In 1793, as we have said, he had been arrested at Troyes as a suspect. Ingenious in turning the most trivial circumstances to his advantage, La Motte

had claimed 50,000 francs damages against the two officers commanding the detachment by which he had been apprehended, alleging that they had robbed him of horses, expensive weapons, and other articles of value. The two officers, campaigning with the army of the Rhine, had even been condemned by default. La Motte now revived the affair after thirty years. There was a sensation among the audience when the advocate of the defendants explained in open court exactly who the plaintiff was. 'The murderer of the queen!' some one cried out. 'La Motte's advocate,' we read in the *Gazette des Tribunaux*, 'hinting that he still had the protection of people in high places, and received support from their beneficence—he even murmured the word "government"—there was a no less lively sensation in the audience than in the royal court.' A report to the Minister of the Interior notes down some of the sayings

of the crowd. 'How can there be any possible connection between such a man and any one of the ministers, I don't care who it is?'

'The police will make use of anybody.'

'If the police do their duty, now that another scandal has been caused by the appearance of the queen's murderer, they can't fail to lock him up in Bicêtre.'

'Maître Lavaux,' continues the *Gazette des Tribunaux*, 'addressed the court for the defendants. In regard to the losses alleged by the Count de La Motte, he lost in reality only a powder-horn, a pair of pistols, a pair of scissors, and a razor (laughter). It was true that a judgment was obtained by surprise against the defendants in their absence. The case he is trying to resuscitate is simply an attempt to raise the wind. He has printed slanderous memoirs, and threatened the defendants that he will publish them; but they refused to have

anything to do with him.' La Motte was fined and condemned in costs.

This case, which had directed public attention afresh to the Count de La Motte, had unpleasant consequences for him. He had formed the habit of taking a daily walk in the galleries of the Palais Royal. Noticed, he was hissed and hooted away by the people walking there. He then fell back on the Luxembourg, a quieter and less frequented spot.

He was lodging at this time at the house of a lady named Legrand. Aged seventy-five, infirm, crippled with gout and rheumatism, unable to drag himself along without crutches, we find him trading to the last moment of his life on the scandal of his name, and on the injury he would do to the royal power by the revelations he was constantly announcing as a thunderbolt. And in truth it almost seems as though the very spirit of his first wife were at this time

animating his shattered frame. In a letter of March 24, 1827, Delavau, the prefect of police, writes to the Minister of the Interior: 'He has just collected in a fresh memoir all the slanders and inventions he had already written elsewhere, and he is looking for some one who will be good enough to buy his disgraceful manuscript.'

La Motte had known intimately the costumier Babin, who had died recently, and he continued to visit his house. Babin's widow gave him his meals on the days—and they were numerous—when his purse did not contain enough to buy food.

At Madame Babin's he met the bookseller Corréard, and made an agreement with him for the publication of new memoirs on the everlasting Necklace affair — memoirs so compiled as to tickle the palate of the public. But as La Motte, old, infirm, incapable of writing, could not hold a pen, Corréard gave him as collaborator (as

'toucher-up,' said La Motte) a young schoolmaster living at Saint-Denis, a native of Bar-sur-Aube like himself. His name was Charles Fellens. La Motte undertook to furnish within a specified time sufficient material for three octavo volumes on the Necklace case, the whole to be revised and corrected by Fellens. While the work was in progress the count had arranged to live with Fellens, who would provide him with food and all other necessaries. After the first volume was issued he was to receive an annuity of 1200 francs, the amount for the first year to be paid in advance.

Here then we have our friend at Saint-Denis, in Fellens' house, literally under lock and key—'in arbitrary confinement,' as said a certain Madame Perrot, none other than Jeanne de La Tour, La Motte's niece, who had so prettily played the innocent young thing in Cagliostro's magic *séances*. From morning till night La Motte

scribbled away. Corréard put at his disposition all the pamphlets and documents he could procure on the Necklace affair, and he worked zealously at his compilation, so that the bookseller was at first highly pleased with the progress made. But gradually his ardour cooled. His temporary supervision of the gaming-houses had bred in him a passion, which grew stronger with age, for calculating chances at roulette and trente-et-un. One day Fellens saw on his table a quantity of cards, and leaves of paper completely covered with figures. Asking an explanation, he was instructed by La Motte in the science of gambling. He conceived a passion for it, and then both of them, author and 'toucher-up,' throwing aside the manufacture of memoirs, might have been seen playing at cards from night till morning, and from morning till night calculating the probabilities. Fellens was so blindly infatuated with his tutor's method that he

decided to sell his school, and with the proceeds to break all the banks in the capital at trente-et-un.

The new prefect of police, De Belleyme, hearing about the scheme for publishing memoirs on the Necklace, intervened as his predecessor had done. Once more application was made to M. Pannisset, the quondam metal-turner, now tenant of the Henri IV. baths. On September 1, 1828, the count signed the following receipt, which he placed in Pannisset's hands:—

'I, the undersigned, acknowledge the receipt from M. Pannisset of the sum of 500 francs, in return for which I agree not to demand from him, or from any one whatsoever, the return of the notes relative to the Necklace affair which I have given him at different times, and also bind myself to write no more on that subject, nor to furnish any material whatsoever relating to it.'

It may be imagined that his project of

publishing memoirs was now definitively given up. 'Under a simple exterior,' says a note from the prefecture of police addressed about this time to the Minister of the Interior, 'La Motte is really very crafty.'

On January 5, 1829, four months after signing the above undertaking, he wrote to Belleyme, the prefect of police: 'The moment I learnt of your appointment to succeed M. Delavau, hope sprang up anew in my heart, and I thought I should succeed in making known the wrong-doing and injustice of your predecessor. Then I got Dr. Harkell to present to you the true story of the conduct of M. Delavau and his agents in trying to persuade me to write my memoirs and deliver the manuscript to them. I had been recommended not to compromise the queen. I have as much as possible avoided the suspicions hovering about her, and only too well founded.' Note the last phrase.

La Motte adds that he has made up his mind to sue Pannisset before the courts for the restitution of the manuscript of his memoirs, which he had been prudent enough to hand over only in exchange for a receipt acknowledging that Pannisset held them merely in trust. Then M. Gauthier, head of the third police bureau, intervened, says La Motte, and urged Pannisset to make an amicable arrangement in order to avoid the scandal of publicity. 'At this time I was in a very unfortunate plight. M. Gauthier knew this, and thought that in my distress I should be glad enough to accept any trifle. On the verge of being homeless and without food, I was forced to accept the 500 francs which Gauthier offered me, out of which Pannisset kept 55 francs for his expenses. So I received 445 francs, and of this sum I owed 300 to my landlord for board and lodging. M. Gauthier took care to make me give him a receipt, in

which it was said that I agreed to return to Pannisset the receipt I got from him, never to write again on this subject, and never to supply anybody with notes that could serve the same object.' And he goes on: 'There's an old proverb which says "necessity has no law." I should have signed anything that was put before me at that critical moment.'

La Motte could not believe that the prefect of police had had any hand in this transaction. 'About a fortnight ago,' he continues, 'finding myself in the same situation as that in which I was forced to accept the 500 francs from M. Gauthier, a person of my acquaintance, to whom I had revealed my distress, proposed to present me to a person who might be useful to me and perhaps secure me a livelihood. I did not hesitate, and allowed myself to be taken to him. I found two persons instead of one. They proposed to make

arrangements with me to take up my memoirs afresh, without concealing anything about the numerous persons who had figured in the Necklace affair. To come to a complete understanding on all these points, they had a second meeting with me in the country on December 28 last. I met the two gentlemen, and they showed me three sheets of stamped paper on a table, telling me that we should have time to draw up three deeds before dinner. I stopped them for a moment to inform them of the agreement M. Gauthier had made me sign, but told them that I regarded the agreement as null and void after the conduct that had been shown towards me, comparing him, in the position in which I then found myself, to a man demanding my money or my life in the depths of a wood, and presenting a pistol at my head.'

The two gentlemen were charmed with the comparison, but thought the agreement

constituted an obstacle to the publication of new memoirs.

'Is that all? Why, that's the best of it! They will attack you; all the better for our interests and yours if they make a scandal. We will defend ourselves, and the editions will go off all the quicker.'

La Motte then enumerates the excellent terms made with him: a salary of 1200 francs, and 200 francs extra for every new edition. There was also talk of reprinting the memoirs of Madame de La Motte burnt in the furnace at Sèvres; by so doing his annual income would be raised by 100 livres.

He concludes: 'In this state of things, wishing to avoid scandal, my age, my infirmities, and my repugnance to making myself talked about, and especially to offending the royal family by the confessions and the details I should have been forced to give in the course of the work, decided

me before writing a single line to consult you as to what I ought to do, for it will be an easy matter to treat with these gentlemen.

'I will merely mention to you, Monsieur the Prefect, that the death of the unfortunate Louis XVI. left me without means of subsistence, and that if Louis XVIII., who had desired to know all the details of this affair [we have seen above what had induced the king to give up his desire], had lived a few months longer, I should not have been reduced to-day to begging your protection in order to obtain an equivalent for the agreement made with these gentlemen. If I obtain this favour from you, I shall pass the remainder of my days in peace and happiness. I am seventy-five years old. I am crushed by infirmities, and have scarcely strength enough left to drag myself along with crutches. In this unhappy state I am expecting every day to succumb, owing to

the awful pain I suffer and the falls I am constantly having. The government or the persons with whom I have been in treaty will not have me long as an annuitant.'

The concluding passage is presented with all the formality and the flattery he thinks necessary. 'The eulogy which is passed on your administration, added to the eminent qualities which distinguish you, persuade me that you will use your credit to prevent a scandal. I am assured that in your wisdom and intelligence you will well weigh the course that should be adopted in these circumstances. I am at ease regarding the future.'

A perfect letter in its kind: ingeniously woven subtleties, insinuations, unctuous in their impudence, a honeyed and unblushing attempt at extortion.

The prefect of police remitted the matter to the commissary Marlot, who replied on July 16, 1829: 'I have known the Count

de La Motte since his childhood. He is a fellow-countryman of mine, and I knew him in his days of splendour and renown, as well as in the poverty into which he is ever sinking deeper. He has been writing for five months as often as his feeble health permits, and submitting pages for Fellens' correction as he writes them. He has already completed twenty-eight manuscript books, which they calculate will make two volumes. They are padding them out to make three if they can. On Monday the 13th M. Fellens came to Paris, accompanied by M. de La Motte, whom he keeps a tight hold on. They left a part of the manuscript with Corréard, enough for the first volume. The printer is going to begin at once, and the other two volumes will follow as rapidly as possible, so that they may be issued to the public within two months at the latest. M. de La Motte is very anxious to have an interview with me, and wants to be freed

from the clutches of Fellens, of whom he has a good deal to complain. He asks for a pension, in return for which he would undertake to publish nothing. Would he keep his word? I doubt it, and I should be very sorry to go bail for him in that respect.'

The commissary concludes: 'This La Motte is an old man as hardened in vice as he is to reverses. We doubt whether he has enough inclination towards good to be honest and remain faithful to an engagement. Nevertheless, as he is infirm, indolent, and incapable of doing anything by himself, it will be a great thing if Fellens can be detached from him and strictly forbidden to ply the trade of pamphleteer (does he not, in his capacity as schoolmaster, depend on the minister of public instruction?). Madame Perrot, the niece (formerly Jeanne de La Tour), assures me that the memoirs will be virulent and scandalous, and that no august name will be spared.'

Further, Marlot was to have an interview at the first opportunity with La Motte himself. He met him on July 17. The count repeated that he was anxious not to have his memoirs printed. 'He would give up the idea,' says Marlot, 'if the government would guarantee him a pension.' It would not be for long, he adds, since La Motte was in such a state of decrepitude that it was impossible to think he could last much longer.

These projects of publishing the memoirs of Count de La Motte and reprinting those of his wife formed part of a larger plan of campaign against the late queen Marie Antoinette, whom the 'patriots' continued to regard as insufficiently guillotined. At this very time, Baudouin, the bookseller, was occupied in publishing certain letters alleged to have been written by her and to her before and during the Revolution, in

which details of high relish were expected. 'M. Baudouin,' says a report to the Minister of the Interior, dated August 2, 1829, 'has already given so many marks of hatred against religion and the monarchy, by printing seditious writings, that several members of the Bourbon family, as he says himself, could not but be justly alarmed at the announcement mentioned above.' The report gives other details: 'It is no doubt on account of his devotion to the anti-religious and anti-monarchical cause, and by way of encouragement and a mark of affection, that the Society of the Temple, of which he is a member, has intrusted to him the high functions of general steward of the estates of the order; an honorary office, it is true, since the order of the said Templars possesses no known estates.'

On Saturday, August 1, a Templar had visited Baudouin, and found him walking up and down in the gardens of the mad-

house in Rue de l'Oursine, where he was then living. Baudouin knew that the government had written to Vienna.

'For all that, I am in possession of some original and authentic copies of the letters I have announced for publication.'

'But aren't you afraid of a surprise raid?' asked the Templar.

'That was thought of, but they haven't dared to do it. Besides, I have taken measures to protect my papers from forcible seizure. They sent detectives to me to try to pick up a few stray bits of paper. They've made me offers, or hinted at doing so, but I have paid them no attention.'

'I must tell you,' said the Templar, 'that some people are afraid you will give way.'

'No fear of that. It's too good a thing for the patriots. I am a child of the Revolution.'

A note affixed to the report gives the information that these letters of the queen

extended from the year 1788 to her incarceration at the Temple. They were addressed to the Emperor of Austria, Madame de Polignac, the Duke of Luxembourg, and several persons at court. The greater part were copies of letters in cipher. All were apocryphal.

About the middle of August 1829, Marlot had a second interview with La Motte, who came to see him of his own accord. 'He came to sound us,' writes the police officer, 'on our ideas as to the intentions of the new Ministry (the Polignac Ministry), desiring to learn if the present authorities entered into the views of MM. de Martignac and Belleyme, which appeared to be to purchase the silence of this wretch, in guaranteeing him a pension, and indemnifying his collaborators, Fellens and Corréard. We stood on the greatest reserve in this matter with M. de La Motte, contenting ourselves with persuading him

to temporise, to act with circumspection, and not to run risks that would be fatal, not to his reputation, which is a mere illusion for a man of his stamp, but to his personal security. He appeared to pay heed to our remarks, or rather, they seemed to scare him, by suggesting to his mind a future of worry as the inevitable consequence of his unpleasant publications.

'M. de La Motte,' continues Marlot, 'confided to us that his work contained some very virulent passages, and in particular some curious revelations on the intimacy between the late queen and Madame de Polignac, mother of the present minister.'

Then follows a passage which it is impossible to reproduce: its purport may be conjectured.

'At this,' adds Marlot, 'we could not contain our indignation, and we told M. de La Motte pretty plainly that if such disgusting things came out, the only

possible result for him would be disgrace and a severe sentence. He left us, promising with his tongue in his cheek that he would think it over.'

The prefect of police sent to the Minister of the Interior a report in which the details given by Marlot were summarised. The report added: 'It will soon be a year since La Motte-Valois proposed to sell his silence to the Administration. He asked for a pension of three or four hundred francs, and a shelter at the Hospice of Chaillot. This offer was not accepted; perhaps it might be renewed.' A marginal note tells us that the minister thought there was no occasion to reopen the matter. The promises of La Motte struck him as unreliable.

There were two separate compilations of the *Memoirs of Nicolas de La Motte*: the first handed to Pannisset in 1824, trans-

mitted by him to the prefecture of police, and deposited in the archives of the prefecture, whence it shortly afterwards disappeared. But in the sequel the manuscript was discovered, as is shown by the following letter, dated August 8, 1829, addressed by Belleyme to the Minister of the Interior :—

'I have the honour to transmit to your excellency the manuscript of the *Memoirs* of M. Delamotte-Valois, which M. Duplessis, late chief of division at the prefecture, has just handed to me, to make what use of it your excellency thinks fit.'

This first compilation, still unpublished, is preserved to-day in the National Archives. A second version, which La Motte tried to get bought up, as we have seen, was compiled in collaboration with Fellens. It was published long after its author's death by Louis Lacour, numerous passages being suppressed.

The compilation and publication of these *Memoirs*, for the sake of the profit he hoped to derive through the scandal they would create, was La Motte's constant preoccupation during the last part of his life, just as the publication of her memoirs had filled the last days of his wife Jeanne de Valois. Both regarded them simply as a means of bringing pressure to bear on the royal government, alarmed at the sensation they were bound to make.

The *Memoirs* of the Count de La Motte, often quoted from the edition issued by Louis Lacour in 1858, are, to put it shortly, of no historical value whatever: they are a tissue of lies and clumsy fables. Doubtless they contain authentic details which it would be very interesting to sift out and collect: but how is it possible to distinguish them among the heaps of falsehoods? La Motte composed his account of the Necklace affair forty years after the events, at an

advanced age, and in deplorable weakness and decrepitude. And finally, he made great use of other works relating to those events, works supplied him by his associates; so that his *Memoirs* are not even personal recollections, nor was it he who held the pen.

The prefecture of police resolved to ignore the opinion expressed by the minister in his marginal note to its report. Possibly, indeed, the minister himself changed his mind. Whether or no, La Motte was again pensioned, from dread of a scandal. As we have just seen, his *Memoirs* did not appear until after his death.

'On September 14, 1829,' writes Lafont d'Aussonne, 'as I was crossing the Luxembourg wood on my way to the gate nearest the Rue Cassette, I caught sight of the Count de La Motte entering the great chestnut avenue. I followed his stumbling footsteps as he shuffled along heavily on his two crutches.

His elegant and careful get-up, his perfectly polished manners, his courtly mode of salutation, spoke in his favour. The ladies sitting on the seat moved up so that he might be more comfortable. I placed myself very near the count, and called him aloud by his name.' They entered into conversation. 'M. de Belleyme,' said the count, 'continued to give me a little pension of 100 louis out of the police funds. He sent for me as I was finishing the revision of my *Memoirs*. He condescended to announce his change of plans for the following week. "Drop all these stories," he said to me as we separated.'

La Motte was at this time living with his niece, Madame Perrot, at 17 Rue des Cannettes.

We meet him for the last time in the eventful days of July 1830, at the age of seventy-seven. He was caught in a crowd, and fell wounded. The officer of gen-

darmerie who was on duty had him carried to a neighbouring house. On October 11, 1831, he entered the hospital of St. Louis, and died there on November 6. In the last years of his life he had made several attempts at suicide. 'I followed the river-bank as far as Villeneuve-Saint-Georges. With the help of my two hands, I slid down to the edge of the embankment. I looked at the spot where I was going to fall, and was on the point of letting go the grass I was firmly holding, when, plunging my eyes into the depths about to swallow me up, I fancied I saw billows of blood rolling down the stream.' These billows of blood, he declares, recalled to his mind the events of September, and he lost all desire to commit suicide.

His death is announced in the *Journal de Paris* in the following terms: 'M. Musto-phragasis, Count de Valois, Knight of St. Louis and of the Crown, noble of Angou-

lême, has just died in Paris, at an advanced age, and in poverty. He was the husband of the famous Madame de La Motte-Valois. He was generally known by the name of Valois-Collier.'

XVII

LEGENDS

So great was the impression produced by the Necklace affair that, as often happens in similar circumstances, the principal actors in the drama came to life again after their deaths.

In 1793, the Count de Semallé met at Liège the Baronne d'Oliva, who had been buried at Vincennes on June 25, 1789. This reincarnation of the pretty Nicole Leguay was married to a certain M. de La Tour, and in concert with him was passing forged notes in various parts of France. Her resemblance to the queen, says Semallé, was striking. 'She assured me more than once that she had no suspicion of the odious

part she had been made to play in the intrigue, and that she had been the dupe of Madame de La Motte.' But one morning Semallé learnt that the *soi-disant* Baronne d'Oliva had quietly absconded, along with her husband.

The last of the biographers of Madame de La Motte, M. Louis de Soudak, found the heroine (who, as we have seen, died in London on August 23, 1791) in the Crimea in 1825. Staroï-Krim bears little trace to-day of the incomparable Solkata of the Armenian poets, the rival of Stamboul, which the finest cavaliers of the Golden Band could barely ride round at a gallop in half a day. Where once rose the ancient ramparts are now ditches, almost filled with sand by the winds of the Steppes. Beyond them is an old mosque propped up by rude beams, and traces of the ancient palaces, pulled to pieces by hands eager to construct new dwellings, which in their turn are

crumbling away. In that spot there exists the garden of an Armenian potter, and in the garden may be found an old man seated on a large stone. In slow tones and with measured gesture the greybeard relates as follows :—

'There used to be in these parts a Countess Gachet, *a former Queen of France*, who had stolen a Necklace. I was a little fellow when she called me to her side, to amuse me with a large diamond, which she turned round in the sunlight at the end of a golden chain, till it made me blink. When she died, and was undressed to wash her body, two letters were found branded on her shoulders.'

'It is strange,' says Louis de Soudak, 'that the name and the story of the heroine of the Necklace case should have reached the Crimea at a time when that peninsula had few inhabitants but Tartars and absolutely ignorant Greek fishermen.'

'In 1894,' continues the traveller, 'I stopped one beautiful sunny morning at Gourzouf, near Yalto, under a superb plane-tree, at the spot where it appears that Poushkin wrote some of his finest verses. Seeing a Tartar passing by, I asked him what interesting things were to be seen in the district. Indicating the north by a gesture, he answered: "At Artek, a few versts in that direction, there is a house where Madame Gachet lived, a woman who had stolen a very fine necklace from the queen of your country. When she died, two big letters were seen on her back."' The legend, it will be seen, is very precise, and it is diffused throughout the country.

On the other hand, the Baronne Bodé in her *Memoirs* gives some curious details about the Countess Gachet, *née* Valois, Countess de La Motte, who was settled in the Crimea from 1820 to 1830. 'I see her

still,' she says, 'oldish, slight in figure, but well made, dressed in a grey cloth overall. Her white hair was covered with a black velvet cap. She spoke a choice French, with animation and grace. . . . She had known Cagliostro, had an inexhaustible fund of stories of the court of Louis XVI., and gave me to understand that there was a great mystery in her life.'

In her will the Countess Gachet appointed the father of Baronne Bodé her executor. Her Armenian servant related that the countess, feeling ill, had spent the whole night in sorting and burning papers. She had forbidden her body to be touched, and ordered that she should be buried just as she was. In laying out the corpse, the old servant noticed on her back two marks, evidently made by red-hot iron.

Louis de Soudak paused in emotion before the stone placed over the lady's tomb. 'Accompanied by an Armenian deacon,'

he writes, 'I spent several hours in wandering about the cemetery, covered with oats and nettles. I found many very old tombstones buried under dead bodies interred above them. The inscriptions had disappeared. The frequent rains and the sea-winds blowing from Theodosia had effaced everything. Thence I repaired to the spot where the cottage of the countess stood. On the face of a charming ravine, the little peasant's dwelling nestled coquettishly, smiling in its bed of verdure. Near by, behind the trees, a windmill spread its great vertebrated sails towards the blue sky. Flocks of geese screeched a hostile reception, while the owner, a sturdy Bulgarian, seemed hardly to relish the inquisitive glance I threw over his little domain. Returning by the silent ravine, at the bottom of which a brook flows, watering the flourishing kitchen garden, I reflected that the hapless exile must often have

wandered in that spot, and that, far from France, her poor heart must then have suffered bitter rancour and poignant regret.'

Who could the mysterious stranger have been? The field of conjecture is boundless. Doubtless she was some unfortunate creature who had escaped from a house of detention during the troubles of the Revolution, and had found the opportunity to set off the depths of her degradation by means of a legend.

After dying in London in 1791, and then in the Crimea in 1825, Madame de La Motte died once more in Paris in 1844. Nearly all the journals made themselves echoes of this sensational end. On returning from the emigration, a bishop had introduced to society, at the house of one of the wealthiest nobles of the district, a mysterious lady. The marquis gave her a wing of his

mansion, and devoted two domestics to her service. He granted her a pension. Before his death, he recommended his heir to continue these favours. The unknown lady never went out except to go to church and to visit the poor. She was infinitely kind-hearted, and the poor used to kiss her hands. But she was brought, by the very people she succoured, into relations with the noblest ladies of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. She was compelled to throw open her drawing-room. She was a wonderful talker, relating anecdotes with all the grace of the olden time; and she played at whist and reversi. It was a favour much sought after to be admitted to her circle—to be received by the Countess Jeanne, the only name she bore. For thirty years she went on giving alms, talking, and playing reversi. Then death rent the veil. In the dead lady's room they found a heap of half-burnt papers. Death

had surprised her throwing the secret of her life to the flames. Amazing discovery! the Countess Jeanne, the holy and revered saint, was Madame de La Motte! At any rate, so declared all the newspapers of Paris in the month of May 1844.

THE END.

BRENTANO'S

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